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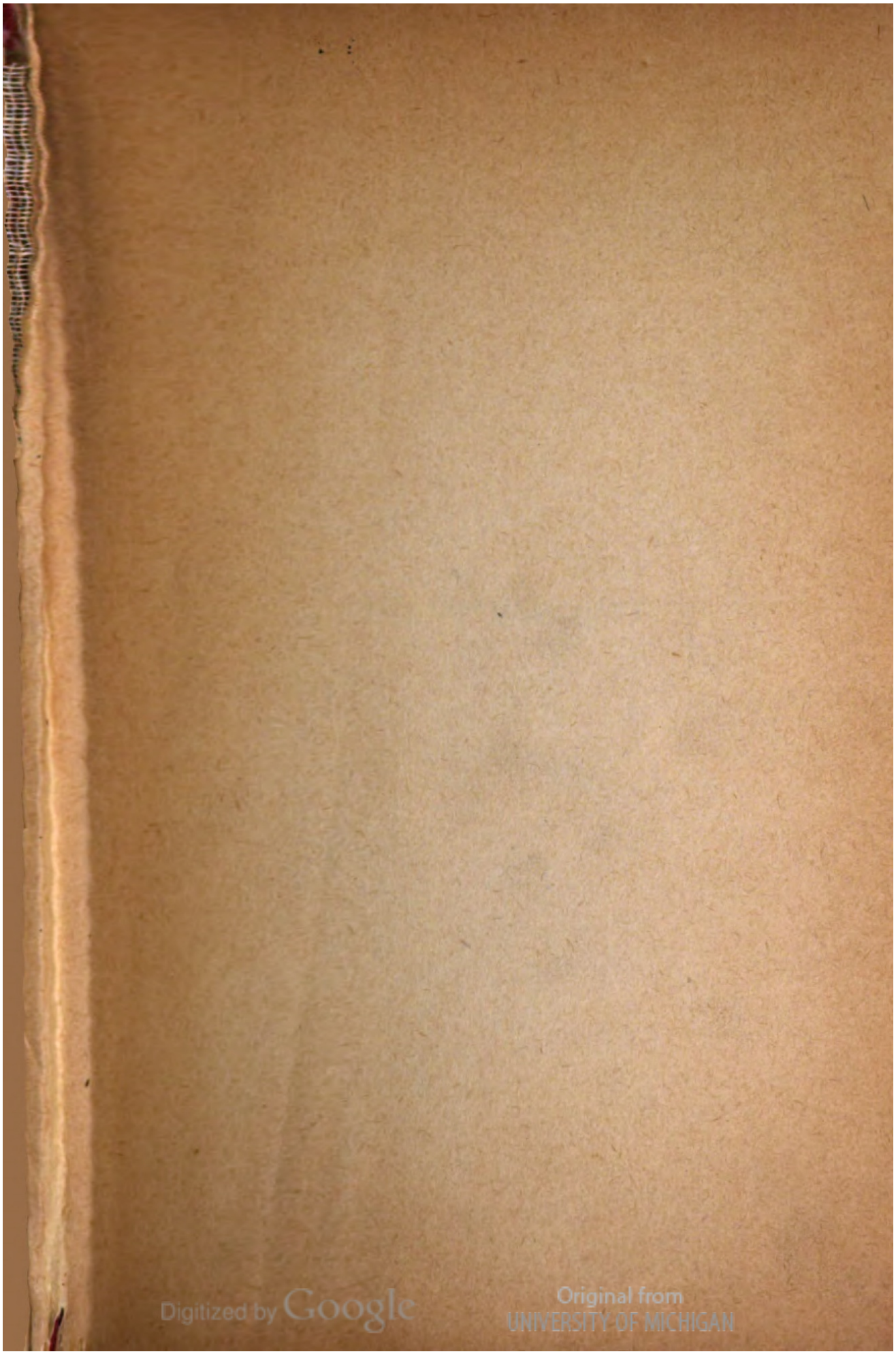
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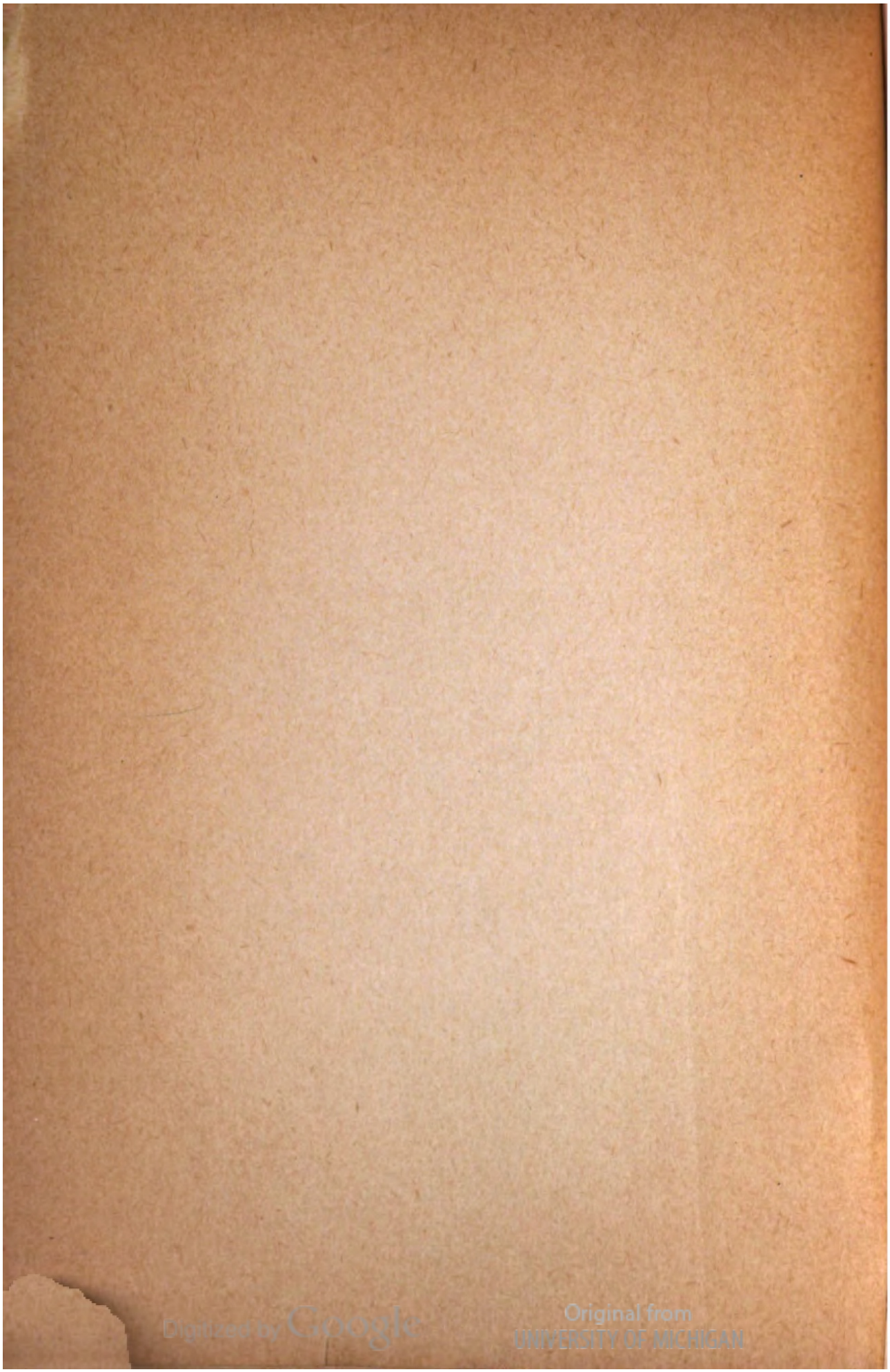

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PILGRIMS IN HOLY SHRINE OF MECCA

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THE GOLDEN EAST

By

SIRDAR IKBAL ALI SHAH

LINCOLN MAC VEAGH
THE DIAL PRESS
NEW YORK · MCMXXXI

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PREFACE

IN writing this book, I have endeavoured to give more than a mere record of my many recent wanderings in the East of to-day. All through it an effort is made to penetrate the outer layer of things, to have a peep into the heart of Asia; and to interpret the true meaning of what I have observed.

One thing which has deeply impressed me is that the whole East is awakening, the entire world of Islam is on trek: but whither is it bound? I hope that the following pages will provide the answer to this important question, which has more immediate bearing upon the peace of the world than even most European political cross-currents. This, then, is a travel book with a purpose.

In conclusion, I have great pleasure in dedicating *The Golden East* to my friend, Professor L. F. Rushbrook-Williams, in whose scholarship I have often taken refuge, and whose powerful personality has now proved to me that Englishmen are still capable of great achievements.

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THE GOLDEN EAST

CHAPTER I

"THE CHANGING WORLD OF ISLAM"

As the waters of the Sea of Marmora stretched before me like so many miles of corrugated silver sheets and I moved on towards Constantinople, the historic tales of Thrace and Troy presented themselves to my mind with great vividness. When, still wrapped in these thoughts, suddenly my anticipating eyes lighted upon an almost unbelievable scene in front of me.

A thin whitish haze floating over the northern waters of Marmora thickened as it ascended on the low-lying hills far beyond; undefined corners of buildings protruded here and there; white mosque domes, like so many huge inverted bowls, thrusting themselves out of this misty cloud only accentuated the piercing points of the slender minarets.

Slowly as the haze melted away from the hill-sides packed with monuments, mosques and houses, the city drenched in the sunshine of the East, stood sharp and clear in its indescribable glory. And I, completely overcome by the enchantment of this Diamond of the Orient, could not help joining in the chorus of some sailors who sang the familiar old song in praise of Stamboul. "Oh! you sing like a Turk," said a boatman to me at a pause. "I thought from the style of your garb that you were a Cossack." Then

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he adjusted the peak of his hat from the back of his head to shade his eyes and started the song again.

At the Galata bridge that connects the old and the new Constantinople, I walked through the winding though broad streets of Stamboul, rubbing shoulders with the members of more than six nationalities. Vainly did I search for the fez, the flowing garbs, the glistening costumes of brighter hue; for much of the old Stamboul, made famous by Loti, has vanished, and a drab Western coating seems to have covered it all. Where once the Sultans rode to the Friday mosques, escorted by red lancers on noble chestnuts and the black silken tassels moved to and fro from their scarlet tarbooshes as their subjects bent low in salutation is now an old story. There are to-day nothing but hats and coats and European dresses.

All must use clothes of the Western style, none must wear the fez; so says the New Law—the Law of the Ghazi. Whether it is a good measure or a bad one may be left to individual opinion; for my own part, however, I am saddened by the disappearance of so much local colour.

But not all Turks in the older parts of the town take happily to the new headgear. If they are obliged to use European hats, they still prefer to make them with their own hands, and of such material as they like, fashioning them to suit their individual type of face, complexion or the shape of the head; with the result that I saw them wearing hats of the most grotesque shapes. Most of them were made of camel-wool cloth in its natural or darker colour, the crown as high as the previous tarboosh, and with a brim hardly more than an inch broad. This brim, let it be added, was so neatly pressed to the sides of the crown that you had actually to examine the hat in your own hands before being assured that there was a brim at all.

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Then others use caps—such as are worn at golf in England—and they likewise display the housewife's needlework. Some even let their wives do a smart embroidery round the edges, but without exception the peaks of these caps seem to worry the wearers. They are always fidgeting with them, and at the leisure hour the peak generally shades either the right or the left ear of the wearer, or is pushed at the back of the neck. It hardly ever is where it ought to be.

As regards other articles of men's dress, since all must wear European clothes, the difficulty is got over admirably by simply wearing a loose-fitting jacket—which the Old Turk always did. Under it he retains the right of using a very broad Kamarbund, usually of contrasting colours, uses no collar or tie, has but slightly diminished the bagginess of his trousers, and not necessarily even now wears boots. But this applies to the people of the old generation, who are more or less bewildered to see the Ghazi casting the kingdom of the Sultans into newer moulds. The younger men wear European dress with quite as great a slovenliness as the men of Milan, whilst the well-to-do people of Constantinople are not affected by this modernization, for if the pride and care that I saw them take of their dresses count for anything, then I have hesitation in saying that Europe has anything to teach them.

Then there are the women of New Turkey, proud of their new-found liberty: no longer would you see them veiled. The *yashmak* which covered their faces is gone, gone perhaps never to return. In many cases the *burqa* or the black robe that hung loosely as they walked in the streets has disappeared too. They have taken to the coat and skirt, but do not, so far, spend ten guineas on a hat. They tie a sort of thin and often coloured veil on their heads, and long hair is rare.

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I found also that the traditions of both powdering and rougeing and many other devices of self-beautifying are very faithfully kept by women in Constantinople. In addition the heavy darkening of eyelids generally indicated the Turkish women in the streets. They wear such high-heeled shoes that I remember seeing two of them actually fall on the cobbled streets in front of the Sublime Porte as they endeavoured to avoid being run over by a cart. And much indeed did I wonder whether the Grand old Vizir who once threatened even the Courts of Imperial Russia would not turn in his grave if he could see two Turkish maidens of to-day with high-heeled shoes passing the threshold of Babay Ali where ambassadors of Kings stood in awe, shuddering to approach the white-bearded and stern denizen of the august Porte of the mighty Sultan.

Not far from the Sublime Porte, which is now closed, with its tarnished glory hanging in disrepair, I came upon the outer gate of the old palace, grim and full of early history of the Turkish Empire as it stands on the ancient site of Acropolis. Till the advent of the Committee of Union and Progress in Turkey it was an impossibility even to peep into this storehouse of marvels.

As you enter the principal gate you are invited to drink from the fountain built in a wall, and a Turkish girl sitting under a large umbrella offers to weigh you on a weighing machine for a trifle. Following the road in the outer part of the palace grounds, I saw the public garden stretching as far as the sea where stands a bronze statue of Mustafa Kamal Pasha, his fists clenched and the face directed towards Asia Minor.

In this garden men and women talked and disported themselves quite as freely as in any public garden in England. A Turkish officer was endeavouring to take the photograph

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of his baby in a pram, but as the infant objected to it, its mother was making every conceivable zoological gesticulation to attract the attention of the refractory child so that the photograph be taken.

When the officer approached the boy again, the child scratched him and tore deep into his father's cheeks. "It is well, it is well," said an admiring old man beside me. "It is a warrior, that boy," he added grimly, "and he needs to be. We are all fighters, brave and honest." The old gentleman got intensely interested in me; pushing the peak cap on one side and forgetting the photographic tussle, he asked me whether I was a fighter, and if not, then why not. "Look at me," he went on, "I have fought in three wars and am fit to take the field three times more yet."

Then a little girl ran up to this old man and, addressing him as Grandfather, asked for money for a pair of stockings that the teacher required her to wear the next day at school; "according to regulations," she added innocently. It gladdened her little heart to hear that her grandmother could sew up the old gentleman's socks and cut them to her size. "This is an orphan child," he explained to me, "her father died of wounds received during the war, whilst her mother was killed by the explosion of a shell that she carried to her cousins in Anatolia when the Greeks were upon us." Pensively dreaming, as it were, the old warrior regaled me with stories already faded, and insisted in my believing that my thanks were due to him for the cool breeze of the garden that I was enjoying. "For have I not been one of those," he asked, "who helped Kamal Pasha to wrestle this part of the old palace in 1913 from Sultan Mohamed for a public garden?"

And over all this panorama of proud and poor humanity

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yawned the kiosks of the Sultan's palace. Taking to the road again up the hill, I noticed a high wall on the right hand side enclosing the Mint ; while on the left museums of both classical and Muslim antiquity are worthy repositories.

Right up at the top of the hill and on the left I saw the inner gate of the Serai which I entered without let or hindrance, unlike many foreign ambassadors who must have waited here for an audience with the Sultans. The courtyard even now in its unkempt appearance is a joy to behold.

Rows of cypress trees added further beauty to the scene as their slender heads hobnobbed in the breeze and stood like sentinels on either side of the central road that leads straight to the Babay-Saadat or the Gate of Felicity, where, standing in the portico, the courtiers had to kiss the hand of the Sultans. On the left of this lies the old Diwan room, which reminded me greatly of Diwan Khas in Delhi. Nearly touching the ceiling of this structure in the Council Room there is a grill where it was the wont of the Sultans to sit behind heavy tapestry and, of course, to hear and see their Vizir without being seen themselves. Behind this is the Imperial Harem.

A curious tower like that of the short spire of a Scottish church marks the entrance to the Harem. Entering through an archway there is a narrow court with windowless high walls, where an old eunuch showed me the quarters of his predecessors who guarded the entrance, and a dark passage brought me to the upper rooms of the black eunuchs.

At that place he told me how tragically old Valida Kylossom was strangled with a curtain cord. The interior of the Harem proper is composed of a series of large and small rooms. The walls are tiled and floors well carpeted,

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CUSTOMERS AT AN ARAB WAYSIDE CAFÉ

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but probably all the more costly furniture has been removed. The arrangements of the rooms are of familiar Turkish style, with divans around and dwarfed tables and cushions, but a gilded canopy still stands in a large room to tell of days long ago when the Banu Sultan held her court. The doors are exquisitely inlaid with mother-o'-pearl and ivory. Baths of marble and tanks are everywhere. Fountains play no more, and the Padishah's own seat in the garden was covered with the dust of ages.

Somewhat struck by the marvellous workmanship of a screen of filigree marble in the Harem, I could not help remarking to a Turk who was visiting the palace with me that there indeed the Sultans did not spare money to make a beautiful place of it. "Yes, yes!" he agreed, as the fire of the old Turk leaped in his eyes; "our Sultans not only spent too much on these ladies' things, but this Harem is the cause of their downfall. Up to the time of Slaiman, no woman was allowed to cast her shadow upon the Celestial Seraglio grounds." Thereby he seemed to infer that the decadence of the Empire began from the time when the Sultans brought their families to that legendary spot rendered "holy" by more than one cult of yore. It is, however, remarkable that historically speaking the Turkish Empire certainly did begin to weaken after that period.

Returning to the third gate—Babay-Saadat, and entering the court, I noticed that the buildings of this palace are not guided by any preconceived architectural plan of construction, for every Sultan built, added, or reconstructed such portions of it as appeared to him desirable at the time of his residence.

In the court, for instance, there are treasure houses, mosques and places where the Prophet Mohamed's relics

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are kept. The treasury of the Sultans is really a museum : there is every conceivable article for the private as well as for the official use of the Turkish kings : from gold thrones to tea-cups, everything is massed there.

In the audience hall I was much amused at a small fountain built in the wall near the door, which it is said was turned on when the Sultans were in private conversation with their ministers so that the sound of the trickling of water might drown the noise of conversation lest there be anyone outside trying to listen to the secret conference. Ancestral relics are there in plenty in the treasury.

That wondrous throne there of Shah Ismail of Persia, taken by Sultan Salim in 1514, is an object of great value. It is of gold in which are chiselled emeralds and rubies, and it literally dazzles the eyes. Likewise the ebony throne of the Reformer Sultan, garnished with rubies and encrusted with silver and gold, stands in its own glory. The ceremonial dresses of the various Sultans embracing a period of nearly four hundred years are there too. Embroideries in profusion, daggers, belts, even shoes and coats of armour, an enormous number of gold and porcelain dishes, water receptacles for narghiles, are all arrayed before one like so many books of history. What thrilling tales of the rise and fall of their owners could these articles tell !

As you come out of the palace a large square lies in front of you. As often as not Turkish soldiers are seen to be playing football there with gusto. At the far end stands the ancient church of St. Irene—now converted into a museum—where not only did I see the old dresses and arms of the janissaries but also was amazed at the sight of a whispering gallery, which originally was used as a confessional. The priest sat on one side and the faithful at the other end of it. The sound that it conveyed was so

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clear that I could distinguish between the tinkle of silver and copper coins. Even breathing could be heard.

Where the road descends to the outer gate, two very handsome buildings of modern type house the relics of the old and historic town of Constantine. In one of these museums I was thrilled to see the sarcophagus of Alexander the Great. It was discovered by Hamid Bey in 1887. In shape the sarcophagus is like a Greek temple, its covering being rectangular in shape. On the sides of it are depicted battle scenes between the Macedonians and the Persians, where Alexander is shown clad in a lion's skin and mounted on a horse. The carving is excellent, and I think that the hunt of the lion and the stag is nobly done, especially where the Greek hero is seen wearing the Imperial belt and is shown arriving to help the victim of the lion.

It was in the bazaars of this Gateway of the East one evening that I underwent an experience which perhaps more than any other led me to believe that occult practice is much more in vogue, much more an everyday thing, whether in the East or the West, than some people might imagine. I was proceeding down one of the long winding streets or lanes of that crowded city, when I felt someone grasp my arm. Aware of the dangers which beset the stranger in the city of the Golden Horn, I shook off the hand which detained me, but had only proceeded a few yards when I felt its grasp once more. Turning angrily I beheld a little old man with a grey beard and turbaned head, perhaps as insignificant a being as East or West could show.

"Be off," I said impatiently, "I have nothing to give you."

"But, Effendi," he replied, "I have something to give you—good advice."

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Slightly amused, because he appeared to be a character, I resolved to humour him.

"Good advice is always welcome to a good man," I said sententiously, "and I will listen to yours with pleasure."

"Come with me then," he said, and began to draw me by the sleeve towards a low doorway. Now this was wholly another matter. As I have said, Constantinople is a dangerous place, and I was taking no risks.

"Have no fear," he whispered, and there was that in his voice which reassured me. I passed through the doorway, then through a lobby into one of the queerest apartments I have ever seen. It was hung with pale yellow silk, behind which lamps were burning, and its only furniture was a metal table which stood in the middle of this small apartment, and two heaps of cushions.

Towards one of these the ancient waved me and seated himself on the other. The lamps at once automatically lowered to a dim glow. Neither of us spoke a word. We just waited.

Suddenly, I know not how, I saw a man's shape standing by the table. How he came to be in the room I cannot say. I could just observe his outline, tall and spare.

"You intended to go to Afghanistan?" said a deep voice.

"That is my intention," I replied wonderingly, "but who are you, and why do you ask?"

"My identity does not matter," said the voice, "but you must not go to your native land. There will be broils and tumults there, civil war and shedding of blood, and if you, a nobleman, are recognized, you will assuredly come to an evil end."

Now at this time Amanullah the King was in Italy, and all was well within his kingdom. Indeed, it looked as

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though he had a long lease of power, so I laughed aloud at the warning.

As if my laugh had broken some spell, the lamps went up—but no figure was revealed standing by the iron table. I jumped up from my pile of cushions, and confronted the old man as he rose from his.

"What is the meaning of this farce?" I asked angrily. "Do you think you can impress me by your trickeries?"

He shrugged his shoulders. "It is no trickery," he said simply. "You have been given good advice. Be wise and take it."

Thinking that it might be a diplomatic dodge to keep me out of Afghanistan at a crisis, and that I might incur risk by lingering there, I hurried away. But the effect of the incident remained. Something much more powerful than fear restrained my homeward progress, and I resolved to go to Anatolia and await events. But nothing happened. After remaining there some months I went elsewhere, and in due course resumed my journey in other parts of the East.

Many months passed, and I had almost forgotten the incident, when news arrived of the rebellion in Afghanistan. I was sitting, of all places, in New Street restaurant in Baghdad enjoying a cup of coffee after lunch, looking dreamily out of the window and pondering over the affairs of my country, when suddenly I saw among the crowd the face of the old man whom I had met in Constantinople, bearded and turbaned. For an instant it hovered before me, with a look of supreme intelligence, then it was gone as quickly as it had come. It did not "vanish." It simply was not there. In vain I peered down the length of the street: no further glimpse did I obtain of it.

Now what in the name of all that is mysterious is a man

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to make of this? Were it merely a diplomatic stratagem, am I to assume that I was of sufficient importance in the affairs of Afghanistan that such a move was rendered necessary?

I am rather inclined to think that we humans and our careers are of much more importance in the eyes of Providence than the rise or fall of kingdoms, and that peculiar and mysterious agencies surround us for the purpose of protecting us and warning us regarding circumstances which might easily cut short our lives and destroy the train of thought which bears us, as on a stream, to the higher regions of soul-existence. I have heard and read of many such incidents as that I have related which would seem, in the aggregate, to bear out this theory. Certain persons may either be of particular value to Providence, or their spiritual condition may be in such a state at a given time that great injury might be done to the immortal soul were the body subjected to danger. I fully believe that the supernatural plays a much greater part in our existences than we actually know.

Scoffers may say that I dreamed or imagined the face of the old man in Baghdad. I can only state in reply to this that I saw him as clearly as I did the other people in the thoroughfare at the time. It was no wraith-like apparition, but a face of flesh and blood.

Some day I hope to return to Constantinople and stand face to face with him once more. But I question if he will be there. I rather think that he will be about his Master's business elsewhere. Indeed, both in East and West, I have encountered other people whom I have shrewdly suspected were also engaged in that business, agents of powers mysterious whose precise vocation we blinded mortals can scarcely comprehend.

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How little do we know of the world after all! New marvels of nature are almost daily unrolled to our view. But surely the marvels of man and of the human soul are vastly more amazing and terrifying. Sometimes they seem to bulk so largely to me, to invade my days with such insistence, that they appear far more imminent and important than anything else. And the small glimpses of those mysteries which have been vouchsafed to me lead me to entertain more than a suspicion that they may actually be our chief business in life—a business more enthralling and enormously more important than any of those more human and conventional avocations on which we lavish our time with such thoughtlessness and carelessness of the loftier side of our natures.

This might have been a digression on my part to introduce the subject of an extraordinary happening in a narrative, but at the same time it made such a deep impression on my mind that I cannot help recording it. But now let me get back to my sight-seeing in Stamboul again.

After a few days' excursions in and around the European quarters, called Pera, in the old Turkish capital, I trekked to the fortified castle known as the Seven Towers, which was strengthened by both the Byzantines and the Turks, who built mighty walls for the land defence of the city. Its Triumphal Arch through which rode the conquerors to be crowned by the people in the courtyard of the fort, presented a contrast to its gruesome dungeons. Many illustrious personages, not even excepting Sultans, after being confined in that political prison-house throughout the chequered history of Constantinople, were either beheaded or shot in one of them. I shudder to think how one of the Sultans after being confined in one of those cells,

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up winding, narrow and murderous steps, was actually strangled by his own mother.

Another flight of steps led on to a longish room full of wooden "cages" where the culprits were chained till executed. And I saw the so-called "pit of blood." It is a sort of a well in which severed heads were said to have been dropped. Near it were the bullet holes where the head of a man might be if he were tied to the stake. When I rolled a piece of paper, and, setting it alight, threw it down the well, it seemed to shed a livid light in its downward course and it took the flame quite three minutes to reach the bottom of the pit, from which its depth can be imagined. Some gifted foreign prisoner had cut an inscription on the rock outside the dungeon before he breathed his last; for none emerged from the Seven Towers alive.

Then the arcaded bazaars fascinated me once again. I cannot say that I went to Turkey looking for adventure. If it comes along, I told myself, I shall not sidestep it, but truly, before I found myself in French Syria, I had enough and to spare for from the first I seemed, as John Davidson says, "to be living a novel." Some men find the atmosphere of the Golden Horn as dull as that of Clapham, but, then, everything depends on the man. I believe there are people who could rush into romance in the New Cut or West 129th Street, just as there are others who could eat Yorkshire pudding and water aspidistras in Samarkand!

On returning from the old Byzantine fortress of the Seven Towers, deeply impressed by its environment of murderous mystery, I was sauntering through a neighbouring arcade when a booth for the sale of old and curious books attracted my wandering attention. A literary friend in England, interested in Oriental antiquities, had requested me to keep a bright look-out for any ancient tomes of

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THE TURKISH PARLIAMENT HOUSE, ANGORA

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value, and, remembering my promise, I halted and began to look over the contents of the stall.

The venerable shopkeeper, as patriarchal a figure as one might hope to find between Morocco and China, at once began to boost his wares. He swore that the volume I held was a veritable copy of the Koran penned by one of the four Companions of the Prophet. In vain I pointed out that it was merely the work of a little-known Egyptian poet, and poor stuff at that, the veriest crambo-clink in provincial Arabic. With a torrent of ejaculations, he swore I was mistaken, and pressed me to purchase the volume for seventy pounds. When I laughed, he dropped to forty, and when I threw down the worm-eaten bundle on the stall, swore roundly that did I not give him at least a pound for it, I would bring bad luck to his "establishment."

Attracted by the tumult, and perhaps by my new European clothes, which were in rather sharp contrast to the "reach-me-downs" which pass for "the last thing" in Constantinople to-day, a small crowd collected, and I was about to break through and go on my way, when the old fellow grasped me feverishly by the arm and placed his bearded lips to my ear.

"If the Effendi would like to see something really of value," he whispered, "let him come inside my shop. I have something there worthy the eyes of a prince."

For a moment I hesitated, but speeches of the sort have always had a most extraordinary fascination for me. Resist them I cannot, so I followed the patriarchal one into the narrow and frowsty interior.

With a great air of secrecy he drew me into its dimmest recesses, and after fumbling about in the darkness, produced a roll of chamois leather, which he carefully unwound. There lay what was ostensibly half a dozen Byzantine

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medals evidently of the eleventh or twelfth century, gleaming in dull golden brilliance. I knew enough to be sure that they were Byzantine in appearance, but for all I could tell they might have been the veriest forgeries.

"Now, Effendi," he exclaimed, "what do you say to these? I can assure you they are authentic," here his voice fell to a mysterious whisper, "as a matter of fact they came from the private collection of Abdul Hamid himself."

I had, of course, bargained for nothing like this. Were the things genuine, and could I procure them for a reasonable sum, they might defray the expenses of my tour in the East. But I had no money to throw away, so I temporized.

"They may be genuine or they may not be," I said coldly, "but if you will bring them to my hotel this afternoon, I will see what can be done—that is if they are going at a reasonable figure."

"To tell the truth, Effendi," said the old fellow, "I am afraid to keep them. The penalty for doing so is heavy, as you know." Here he shuddered, and no wonder: swift punishment awaits the resetter of Sultanic spoil in Stamboul. "The very least I can give you the medals for is fifty pounds. That, as you will see, is a rock-bottom price."

It certainly was, if the antiquities were genuine! If authentic, they must be worth at least a couple of hundred apiece, I judged. Probably the old rascal had bought them from some soldier for a few piastres.

"You must come to my hotel," I repeated. "I can do nothing here," and giving him my address, I left him. On the way back I stopped at a drug store and purchased a small bottle of nitric acid.

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He turned up at the hour I had stipulated, and as I heard him knock at the door of my apartment, I dipped a burnt match in the acid and kept it concealed behind my back. With many genuflections, he produced the medals. I selected one, and before he could intervene, applied the chemically treated match to its glittering surface. Immediately it turned a vivid green !

Horribly disappointed, I am afraid I uttered a very bad word. The old fellow screamed, howled, frothed at the mouth. So comical was his appearance that I forgot my anger and laughed immoderately.

" Curse you, son of a Giaour ! " he mouthed. " You have ruined my glorious, my irreplaceable medal."

" Glorious brass ! " I retorted in my best Turkish, " the thing is a fake absolutely. Get out of this in a hurry, you old fraud, or I'll kick you down every stair in the hotel."

" O thou of little sense," he retorted, " dost thou not know that the ancients did not make their coins and medals of pure gold ? What you behold is parcel-gilt, as all Byzantine medals are."

" Parcel of lies," I jeered. " Now go, unless you are looking for trouble."

" You will regret this," he stormed, shuffling from the room. What was my chagrin to learn from an antiquarian friend shortly afterwards that my patriarch had been justified in his assertions ! I hastened to his booth but both booth and patriarch were gone, and in the place where they had been, an old woman was still selling lemonade. Of the old man she knew no more than of the whereabouts of yesterday's wind, nor did any of the neighbouring traffickers. He had become as successfully lost in Stamboul as a needle might be in a haystack.

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It was getting already late for the Friday Prayer and shopkeepers were putting up their shutters as I hastened my steps to St. Sophia mosque. The faithful thronged the ancient church : men were carrying their hats in their hands and either tied handkerchiefs over their heads as they prayed or wore skull caps. Great indeed was the congregation that rose at the call of Allaho Akbar of the Hoja as he ascended the dais. Women, too, in their rows stood clad in black, folding their hands over the breasts. All were silent as the priest recited the prayer in deep intonations. Then we knelt and touched the ground with our foreheads at the end.

The conversion of this ancient place of worship has lost none of its impressiveness, but the gallery of the Sultan Abdul Hamid heavily painted in gold was empty and forlorn. Small groups of men and women listened to the sermons of different Mullahs whilst boys recited the Koran in the centre of the mosque. The same bending and swaying as is seen at prayer all over the world of Islam, was there in the mosque in all its glory. The Moslem quarters which lie mostly in the older parts of Stamboul have some very beautiful fountains and mosques which follow truly the Turkish traditions. So faithfully do they characterize all their customs that on the tombstones are cut the representations of turbans or those of the tarboosh, and passing along the Bosphorus to Bebek or the Golden Horn the signs of the times are writ large in every nook and corner.

And although I have endeavoured to give as best I can the picture of this city, yet if there is any place on God's earth that beggars description it is admittedly Constantinople, for the beauty upon which the eye feeds here is of its own peculiar kind. It is perhaps the only town in

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the world where you need not fix any particular time to go out and find the scenery at its best. Noon, midnight, early morning or when the last rays of the sun are pouring liquid gold into the waters about the Galata bridge, this country of the Sultans is always attired in its bridal raiments. Has nature's own hand, I wonder, intentionally coloured the façade of the low hills and the seas of Stamboul so richly in order to hide the gruesome tales of early history that lie buried within its walls? Who knows! Who knows!

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CHAPTER II

NATIONALIST TURKEY TO-DAY

A THIN rain was falling and electric lamps opened out like so many tiny buds of light in the cypress groves as St. Sophia mosque stood silhouetted against the hill when I lumbered my way to the Galata bridge at Constantinople to take the ferry boat to the shores of Turkey in Asia. Thinking myself too early for the steamer I slackened my pace to buy a lottery ticket from the " Ikbal " booth over which was perched an aeroplane model. The proceeds of this game of chance were to go, so I was told, to the purchasing and fitting up of aircraft for New Turkey. There perhaps I tarried too long, regretting that even the booth that bore my name, which, when translated means " Good Luck," brought no favourable results to my lottery ticket, for the rush for the boat had begun at the gate of the ferry when I arrived.

Now this rush is no ordinary rush. It is both orderly and rough, for it depends hugely upon your temper at the moment. It can be a scramble like the pilgrim boat at Bombay, a railway station rush and jostle as in Calcutta during the Pooja holidays, or the undignified trot at the rabbit-warren of the Oxford Circus Underground. I felt that practically all these three kinds of struggle were represented at Galata. This yellow-funnelled five thousand tonner had first, second and third class accommodation, but none seemed to care about such different stations. All

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were brothers and sisters and comrades. You sat just where you found room, no matter what fare you had paid. For part of the way I had to stand, and as the little boat pitched and rolled unmercifully I did not care whether I stood on my feet or head. The seat just before me was comfortably occupied by a Turkish soldier and his family ; and when I edged round to find a seat and looked rather appealingly at the soldier I very nearly sat down on a big basket close to him, but he forbade me, and all I could catch of his long-winded explanation was, " after the ticket collector passes . . . after the ticket collector passes ! " The significance of this I did not realize till later.

The stretch of the sea up to Hydar Pasha is not very large, yet it can be sometimes worse than the English Channel ; and it was so that evening, for the waves swept the decks in wild fury. A Greek priest crossed himself every time the blue waters lashed his window and the ticket examiner clipped the tickets and eyed the shapeless bundles of the passengers. He asked a question and received a reply from the soldier about the basket. Feeling dissatisfied he looked back at every turn of the gangway. Not many minutes had passed when feeling myself truly incapable of standing and finding the soldier still conveniently sprawled on the seat, I flung myself over the basket. There followed a squeaking and crowing noise from inside the collapsing basket, whereupon I received a kick from the soldier and a good slap on my cheek from his wife. " You have killed our prize cock ! " they shouted. " O ! you villain, you have ruined us ! " And the family was properly angry. As I struggled out of the basket, they discovered that my weight had broken a leg of the cock. The ticket collector was soon upon the scene and demanded from the soldier not only four times

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the fare of the bird in addition to a fine, but also wished to report him to the military authorities for smuggling the live-stock without a ticket. " If it is alive, it can be made otherwise," shouted the soldier at the boat officer, and drew a small knife. He forthwith cut the throat of his prize bird to prove his right to carry the dead cock without a ticket. But in the haste he did not perform the operation aright, especially as the ticket collector had impeded the process, and they were still trying to catch the prize bird —its half-severed neck wobbling as it ran hither and thither—when I got out at Hydar Pasha and under such dramatic circumstances cut my connection for the time being with European soil.

There at that north-west point of Asiatic Turkey I realized that I had come to a different world. In the Loquenta, or the restaurant, they were eating salads soaked in oil, and my desire for milk in my tea raised a laugh at the counter as none there uses milk in tea, and their coffee is over-saturated with sugar. A Turkish officer in a corner, quite conscious of his dignity, sported a long cigarette holder as he clicked his heels or struck his long boots with his crop and watched for the impression that his movements made upon us.

Weary travelling over desolate country southward brought me to Eskishahr ; a dusty, poverty-stricken and tumble-down village it is ; and there I noticed what war meant to the Turks. The Greeks had occupied Asia Minor even beyond Eskishahr, and on their retreat had demolished practically the half of it and set fire to the rest ; in consequence roofless and shapeless houses still covered with soot and dust stand there as a living monument of that gruesome struggle.

Under the shadow of a minaret in this war-stricken

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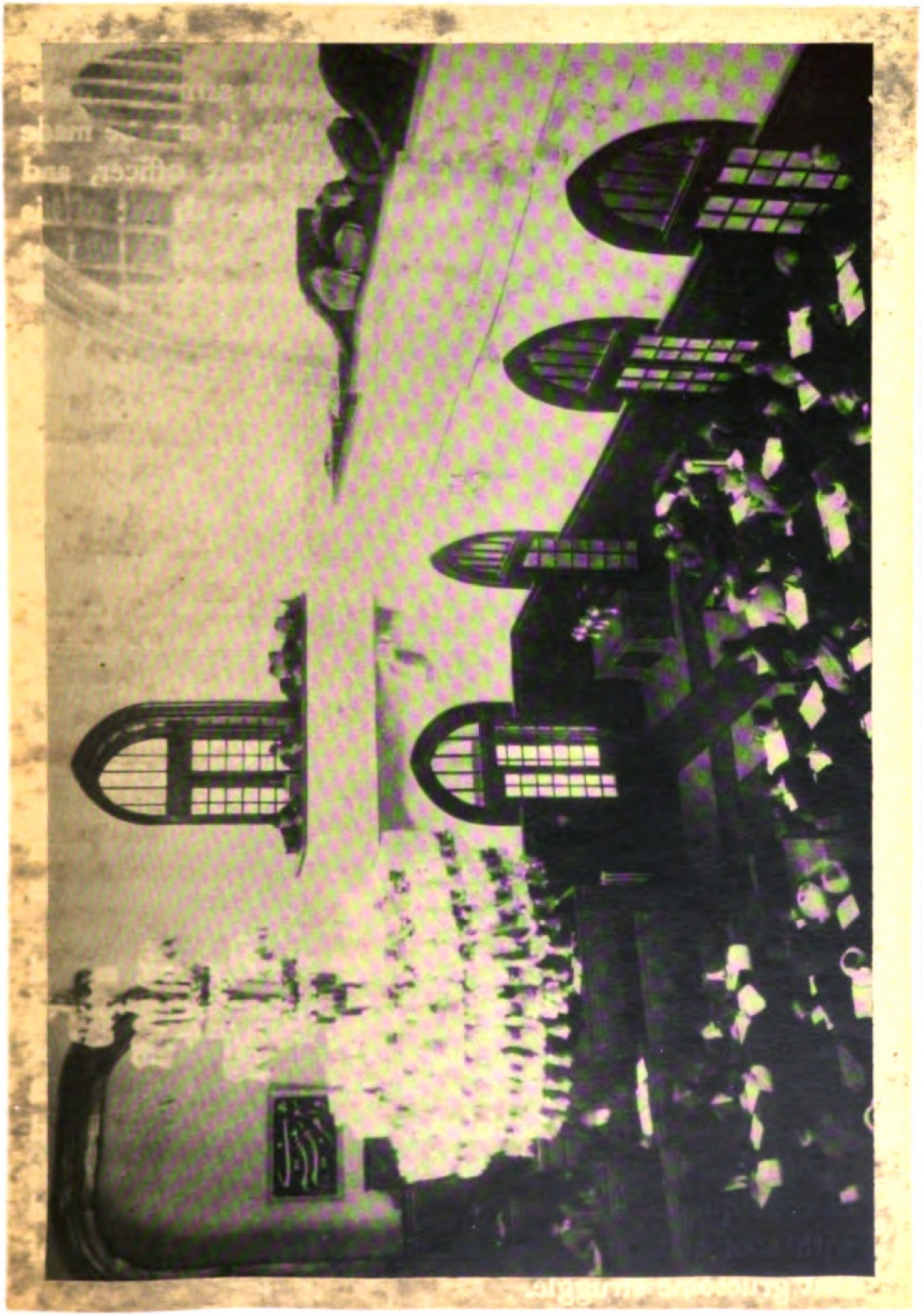

SITTING OF TURKISH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AT ANGORA
Mustapha Kemal Pasha, the President, is in second box, right-hand gallery.

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village I saw an old woman, bent and infirm, selling beads, meerschaum pipes and cigarette holders. Reconstruction was going on apace, streets were being put in order there, and a part of the village is lit by electricity, but Eski cannot shake off the dust of the arena yet awhile. The political scare, both domestic and foreign, is so great, indeed it is quite comprehensible after the last Turko-Grecian war, that I had to carry my passport everywhere I went in Eskishahr, and even then the policemen compelled me to accompany them to the Markaz or the Central Office. All my solicitations and credentials were a dead letter to them, and even when after a patient translation and explanation I satisfied them that the phrase in my passport describing the Foreign Minister as the "Member of Privy Council," had nothing whatever to do with me personally, but merely was one of his distinctions, they decided that my case had better be taken to the higher authorities. Besides, they thought that my "Aks Machine," or photographic camera, appeared of infinitely greater value than the clothes that I had on, and they did not quite understand as to how I came to possess it. At a wayside restaurant on our march to the Central Police Station, the usual politeness of the Turk was shown when one of the men hailed a donkey driver and requisitioned his mount for me till we had coffee. At the police station I was ushered into a bare room with no windows, and a chair was given to me. After that the older of the two policemen slammed and barred the door after him as he went out and locked it securely. Behind those bars I sat for no less than eighty minutes, till a nervous-looking youth asked me whether I had a Tazkarah or Turkish permit, and if so then I might give it to him along with my passport for examination. I produced the permit but refused to hand over my pass-

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port, saying that I always went personally where my passport went. One glance at my Tazkarah was sufficient to win my liberty. He had me unlocked with profuse apologies, and seemed not to hear when I told him that the Tazkarah was seen by his policemen also. I have not quite got to the bottom of that mystery, and the best explanation is possibly that the policemen could not read the document. In the room of the chief of the police himself a feast was forthwith arranged. There were melons, sweets, coffee, roast meat, lettuce salad soaked in olive oil and dried cheese. Officers and men all came and sat at the same table to celebrate my release, so to speak, for I quickly realized that precautions were very necessary, and this mistake could arise anywhere ; consequently the affair left no sting. I was, however, too upset to eat, and beyond a cup of coffee and a slice of melon, touched little else, but others were very busy and talked and laughed and exchanged chunks of food with each other. Nor was there anything entrenched or aloof about them, because when I told them that I liked Turkey so well that I might make it my home, their admiration for my "noble" intentions was unbounded, and then they began to ask me even my most private affairs, for they seem to hold that you cannot treat your neighbour or would-be neighbour as yourself unless you know every phase of his life. Yet I drew the line at the request of a sergeant to tell him of my love affairs. He told me all about his, all the same. "And now I have fourteen children," he finished with a laugh. In the evening under the fading light in an open-air café as I sat turning over the episodes of the day in my mind and toying with my cup of coffee, and the gramophone at the counter struck a melody of long ago, whilst rustics of the village sat around crude tables endeavouring to forget

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the heat and the toil, I thought how well that picture pulsated with the inheritance of Turkish life of other days.

Not far from Eskishahr as the road winds in and out of parched hills on a low ridge going slightly south-west towards Angora, I came upon the monument of Turkish victory marking the site of the first definite defeat of the Greek army. From here the Turkish forces, being assisted by the columns under Mustafa Kamal Pasha at Afium Kara Hissar, the Greek army met with reverse after reverse till they embarked home in a hurry from Anatolia. This monument is of white stone and I saw them busy with the construction of outer walls. Further east one's eye is pleased with the spectacle of green fields, which laid in a circular fashion terminate at their southern extremity with a neat looking villa. You are informed with a certain pride that this oasis in the desert is the estate of the Ghazi offered to him as a token of gratitude by the Turkish nation.

Modest hills of Eski more or less abruptly rise to greater eminences beyond this point when just in front three or four heights enfold a curious panorama. It is Angora—the nest of New Turkey. First on the western skirts of the dry valley formed by these hills stretch the gardens ; then the ground rises but slightly and up to the top of the largest hills is packed with low-roofed houses of the old town. The city wall with turrets and the citadel which Timur the Lame built is still to be seen at the crown of the hill. Then the next rocky hill Chikaya with its valley is the Yanishahr or the New City: the many beautiful modern houses which adorn the area are a testimony of the will and the purpose of Turkey to-day for reconstruction. The new capital at Angora shows more truly than anything else the soul of the modern Turk.

Coming up to the town the first building of consequence

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is the Parliament House ; then there are other Government Offices, and up and through the old bazaar there is the Co-operative Stores—the benefits of which are given to the war orphans—beyond this one passes some beautiful buildings of the Ministries of Justice and Agriculture and finishes with a school building before the road climbs up to the Hissar or the Citadel. The valley below is now a wide street where stand banks, post offices, foreign embassies and new houses. In the centre of this unfinished boulevard is a statue of the Ghazi ; and where this marvellous road leaving the old quarters goes up to Chikaya hill the building of the Russian Embassy is worthy of mention. At the top of the hill are other Embassies, and just behind the British Embassy, in the fold of the hill, is a picturesque nook where stands the residence of Ghazi Mustafa Kamal Pasha. His house, not unlike an English baronial castle, is fairly large and the gate was guarded by soldiers. A German family has built a magnificent house with a fine tennis court near the Ghazi's lodge, and the good lady of the house seemed to be more concerned about my approach to that part than the Ghazi's guards at the gate. When I asked her whether the road leading up was a blind one, she very nearly dropped her knitting and made no reply. Desirous of having a good look at the fine panorama of the New City, where building operations in the valley below were so rapid that you almost see houses spring into existence as you gaze, I sat down under a forlorn acacia tree at the crossing of the road that led to the Ghazi's house and the German tennis court. Here I was in full view of the guards and a dachshund. The dog objected to my presence there, and when it tore savagely at the wire mesh of the tennis court to the amusement of the Turkish guards, its mistress came up to the edge and

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taking the dog in her arms kissed it. " I say," she shouted up to me, " have mercy at this dog, and move on . . . or," she added hugging it, " the pet will burst its lungs barking at you." I refused, however, either to reply or to comply, for although I might not have thought it necessary to shave for three days I looked less like a tramp than someone whom I saw push his head out of a window in the far corner and yell out, " What is the matter, should I come armed ? "

As the sun was beginning to beat rather oppressively I betook myself to the town and had a huge meal at a wayside restaurant. Here the familiar Kababs or the roast meat of Persian origin is " nationalized " as it were and is served in the shape of chillyless curry. The eating-house was crowded with concession hunters, agricultural implement agents, architects of practically every European nation except England. Even opium merchants all the way from Japan could be seen. In the corner of the room, the cook-proprietor was preparing roast of thin mutton slices, all piled one on the top of the other, perhaps a hundred or more of them, on a spit, and moving this mass over a charcoal fire.

Anon I heard a distant roar of shouting of the crowd, and every moment it became louder and louder. Then as the outriders passed before us down the hill in a wild canter the meaning was clear : the Ghazi was on his way to the military review. Every man and woman rushed to the scene where this Asiatic Napoleon was to pass ; the pavements, tops of the houses, windows, tree-tops seemed only to consist of human faces ; and as the huge open motor-car bumped slowly along the uneven stone-paved and narrow road down the Kara Oghlund Street, its occupant, Mustafa Kamal Pasha, clean-shaven and dressed in European

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fashion, held his top hat in his hand frequently acknowledging the solicitations of the people. His steel-grey eyes set under a stern pair of eyebrows were full of smiles. The crowd appeared to have lost control of its passions, for they were shouting welcome, waving handkerchiefs, tiny flags or crying aloud with sheer joy. "This is our deliverer, this hero," sobbed a man near me. "May Allah protect him!" and he held his three-year-old son aloft over the heads of the people to give him a view of the Turkish President.

I would indeed have missed the real psychology of the Turk had I omitted to see this procession pass through the streets of Angora, for there is now in my mind an abundant proof of the fact that the Turk is simple—simple as a child. He either loves or hates; and there was no mistaking the fact that the passionate reception, so full of affection, which the people gave Mustafa Kamal Pasha that day was a genuine effort at hero worship.

But I would not be true to my commission if I did not show what the Turkish President means to Turkey; or indeed to the new world of Islam: for his career is a romance of the modern age. The significance of the devotion of Nationalist Turkey towards Mustafa Kamal is really incomprehensible till one knows more about him.

In the early 'nineties of last century, a brown-haired little Turkish boy at Salonica was absently listening to a sententious father, who lectured him on the need for greater application to his books if he were to aspire to the coveted position of a Hoja, a priest. But the rather wordless youngster had long ago made up his relentless mind on the subject of a career. It so happened that he lived not far from the Turkish barracks, and the brilliant uniforms of the officers quartered there appeared to him much more

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desirable than the habit of the religious. So parental counsel finally waned in the face of a determination now grown proverbial in the Moslem world, and the boy Kamal was sent to the local military academy.

A tremendous earnestness assisted rapid progress, and Kamal found his way to the Military College at Constantinople. But no sooner had he received a commission, than, like many another modern-minded young Turkish officer, he became suspect to the mediævalists who surrounded the court of Abdul Hamid, and in 1904 was bundled off to Syria under what was practically a decree of banishment. There he lingered three years, but at the end of that time returned to Salonica as a minor staff officer in the Third Army Corps.

The authorities had, however, been correct in their suspicions, for this rather short and thick-set subaltern with the steady blue-grey eyes, high cheek-bones and the chin of the reformer had not changed his opinions during his period of exile. On his return to Turkey in Europe, one of his first acts was to identify himself with the Young Turkey Party, and when the Revolution of 1908 blazed forth, he soon found a place in its advanced ranks. The new Government was kind to him and dispatched him to the French military manœuvres, recognizing his interest in and knowledge of modern European methods of warfare. Shortly afterwards he did excellent service in the war with Italy in Tripoli, and in the rough campaigning against the Bulgarian army served as Chief of Staff to the New Gallipoli Army Corps. At the conclusion of hostilities, in which he had thoroughly enjoyed himself, he was dispatched to Sofia as Military Attaché, with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel.

The Ghazi is a type such as is to be found where con-

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ditions favour the intrusion of the soldier into the sphere of politics. Indeed, to my way of thinking, he resembles the late President Obregon of Mexico more than any other existing world-figure. Both men were soldiers who became dictators not only because they were public idols, but by reason of their ability to introduce a powerful sense of military discipline into a distracted political environment. Kamal Pasha would, I feel convinced, have been in his element in Mexico or Nicaragua.

But such men as he do not make particularly good attachés. Not that he is not point device in dress and deportment, for there is nothing of the shaggy rough-hewn dictator in his appearance, which is studiously correct and well-groomed. But he is scarcely a man of social gifts, and is far from communicative, unless really deeply interested. He smokes too much. But the smoke-screen is a very popular device of the politician who desires to remain silent or to stave off the unnecessary catechist, as Bismarck, Roosevelt and others have demonstrated.

When the World War broke out, Kamal Pasha was sent to Thrace, and at the time of the British landing at Suvla Bay commanded the passage of the Dardenelles. But he fiercely resented German tutelage, and lost no opportunity of showing his dislike for it. He quarrelled with Inver Pasha because of the elder man's resignation of his command into German hands, and at last became so difficult that, after the British evacuation of Gallipoli, the Staff packed him off to the Caucasus to hold the Russians in check. No use! His extraordinary sense of the proprieties of military organization rendered him at last so obnoxious to Headquarters, that he was quietly shelved by an appointment to tour Central Europe. This he did, with excellent results for his own experience, but on the

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A WESTERNISED VILLA IN ANGORA, THE TURKISH CAPITAL

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accession of Sultan Wahiddin he was given a command in Palestine, where he once more found himself up against German interference in the person of General Liman von Sanders, whom he came to detest.

With the Armistice, his day undoubtedly dawned. Assembling the remnants of the Turkish army in Southern Anatolia, he impressed authority so greatly by his position that he was placated with a high place at the War Office. Throughout the difficult and stormy period of transition which followed, he acted strongly and diplomatically. What seemed a debacle to most was to him but a time of reconstruction. In May 1919, the Greeks seized Smyrna, and the Constantinople Government, acting under Allied control, dispatched Kamal to North-Eastern Anatolia as Inspector-General of the Turkish forces in that province. But instead of disarming the troops, as he had been ordered to do, he kept them together, only to be recalled, however, by Damad Ferid Pasha, the Grand Vizier.

By this time he had fully made up his mind as to the course he was to pursue. Believing that the Allies desired the effacement of Turkey in Europe, he applied himself to the task of reconstruction and opposition. He organized a Nationalist movement in 1919, and on its failure, nothing daunted, commenced another. At a Congress in Anatolia, he declared the absolute independence of all Turkish territories within the boundaries affected by the Armistice, and managed to get a national backing through a general election at Constantinople. Persecution followed. The Government at Constantinople denounced him and his Nationalists as rebels and outcasts from Islam. But Kamal convening a Grand National Assembly at Angora in April 1920, took matters out of its hands, and in 1921 received official recognition from the Russian Soviet, and

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what may be regarded as the unofficial sanction of all Europe for the new State he had created.

By this time the Army and the great majority of the populace had come to regard Kamal Pasha as a national hero, and when Greece declared war, the old racial assurance of the Turk returned. The invaders were speedily driven out of Anatolia and Smyrna, and the Allies, their hands full elsewhere, and only too satisfied, probably, to see the beginnings of a new and settled regime in Turkey, withdrew from Constantinople and recognized the independence of the new Turkish State by the Treaty of Lausanne.

Kamal is, indeed, the New Turkey personified, as surely as Mussolini stands for the New Italy. In April, 1920, the first Grand National Assembly had elected him President, and for that matter he had really been the national head since 1919. Turkey may have Parliamentary Government, a constitution and a Council of Ministers, yet Kamal is her absolute dictator, a Government of One.

Constantinople is virtually a provincial city. Everything is administered from Angora. The boy who was to have been a mullah has developed an almost savage distrust of the Muslim clergy, and small wonder, too, for after their thraldom of 1908, and later revolt in Kurdistan no one can love the Hoja of Old Turkey. The Khilafat and Shiehk-ul-Islam are no more, and the new Turkey is practically "anti-clerical" if not agnostic. The culture is a modern one, the fez has been abolished, and Turkish women sport the weeds of the Rue de la Paix. The law has been simplified and a mechanical age is in view.

We know as much about Kamal as we know of Mussolini, of Kitchener, of Bismarck. The actual characteristics of such men are not readily unveiled. What can one "know"

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of a man who speaks perhaps a hundred words a day and sits mute as a Buddha, surrounded by clouds of cigarette smoke? Some will tell you that Kamal is a mechanical organizer, like Kitchener, whose mentality runs on the wheels of system alone, others that he is an inspired patriot, so absorbed in the task of reconstructing his country that he has no time nor thought for anything else. And from what I know of him I believe that there is a modicum of truth in both opinions. But can I forget the procession down the Kara Oghalund in Angora when he passed through the street to review his troops. Every face was thrust out of little Turkish windows; roughly paved sidewalks were a mass of shouting humanity, men and women waved flags, threw flowers in his way, greeting their military hero; they were shaking with appreciation, passionate excitement, and there the Ghazi sat in his car, top hat in hand, his eyes almost tear-dimmed as he acknowledged the salutations of his people. And I thought that I had seen the modern Napoleon.

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CHAPTER III

THE CRADLE OF THE TURK

WHEN I left Angora for Afium Kara Hissar in the Western Anatolia, not many miles had I journeyed than I was among the real Turks—Turks whose grandsires won Constantinople for Sultan Fatch—for it is at a wayside village where life goes placidly on where men stoop to fate and the laws of Allah are obeyed. Here also I was able to compare Old Turkey with the New. Winding through the short mountain gullies ran a stream skirted with green pastures littered with flocks of Angora goats, and here nestled a picturesque village populated by the children of Osman. Peasants, rather thick-set of structure, sat smoking under the overhanging wooden balconies of their homes, and not infrequently made room for the passage of camels and droves of donkeys down narrow streets already crowding with veiled women or children as the evening glow paled upon the minarets, and the village supply of water was being carted in large bullock skins on the ponies, and four-wheeled arabas with solid wooden wheels packed with chopped hay came rattling down the cobbled lanes.

But after a brief halt there I pushed on towards Afium Kara Hissar, and the city, fraught with the memories of early Saljaks, the Greek-Turkish war and the retention of the British prisoners from Katul Amara, wears a mysterious shroud of gloom as it first comes in sight.

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The town is of the usual Turkish style of narrow lanes and overhanging wooden and latticed balconies, minarets and domes : but the curious fact about it is that it skirts a huge rocky hill surrounded by an old Byzantine Castle of Acroenus which overawes the whole city like some giant of ancient legendry. The air was cool and exhilarating enough in the streets on that moonlight night, but up above the crest of the crag was covered with dark clouds ; and the current of the air must have been swift there for the moon now peeped, now covered itself behind the dark clouds and appeared to stab the massive rock like a silvery scimitar. Despite the late hour not all the inhabitants of the town were asleep, for in various alleys men were busy packing large quantities of opium for the next day's sale. The town in fact owes its name to the opium trade, for the name translated into English means "The Black Fortress of Opium." Also a number of soldiers paraded the town as if the place was under martial law. There is no doubt, however, that although complete peace now reigns in Anatolia, Afium is still considered an outer gate of Angora, and no one forgets that the Ghazi Mustafa Kamal launched his offensive against the Greeks and won from this point. A burnt part of the town still enshrines the memory of the Greek occupation of Afium Kara Hissar.

Wandering through a somewhat parched country broken here and there by stark and rocky eminences for some distance southward, my eyes were at last refreshed by the appearance of verdure, sparse though it was, on reaching the neighbourhood of ancient Iconium or Konia as the town is known to-day. Quite apart from the fact that old history of the Saljuka still lingers there and its monuments and religious institutions, both past and present, give it an

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exceptional importance, which I shall describe presently, from a traveller's point of view the place is of considerable interest : for examining its geographical position between the Central Anatolian plateau and the junction of the Taurus and Anti-Taurus mountains to its southern boundary, the province of Konia is in a measure isolated from the rest of the country, and this circumstance accounts for its being the repository of old traditions of Turkey, an index of the fact that true Osmani Islam still survives there, materialist tendencies at Angora and elsewhere in Turkey notwithstanding.

Konia lies in the heart of land full of orchards, cornfields and pastures. Water for irrigation is plentifully supplied by a large lake near the town and practically the entire population consists of agriculturists ; and emphasizing the necessity of agricultural development, Ghazi Mustafa Kamal Pasha's statue here shows his right hand stretched over a plant of wheat. Consequently the real Cilician Turks, who helped the Seljuk Sultans to make this area the centre of Islamic culture for 500 years, are to be met here.

A Turk, therefore, belonging to Constantinople and another to Konia differ as does chalk from cheese. The style of houses, the dress and the habits and customs of the inhabitants here are those of the genuine material which formed the core and the backbone of the Turkish race. Walking through its lanes one immediately notices that they are generally clean and wide, with few exceptions the houses are surrounded with high walls of clay, that women are not in evidence, that the fez round which a white or yellow narrow turban is bound is still used as a head-gear and voluminous dress can be seen.

Konia being a great wheat market, the life of the place

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of about 50,000 souls centres around the village inn where rest the caravans from Qaisari in the east or Adana in the south. A night scene in a Caravan Sarai which is called Khan in Konia was not a new experience to me, for in Central Asia such rest-houses I had seen in plenty, but it was remarkable how great a similarity existed in the atmosphere, although the two regions are separated by thousands of miles of land and sea. The cessation of all work at the call of the evening prayer, the chanting of prayers by traders behind their bags of merchandise, while keeping a watchful eye open in case the village urchins engaged in their petty pilfering at the corn heap, the lighting of camp fires and congregating around it, the yard chock full of carts, the whinnying of pack ponies, the bubbling of camels and the buzz of talk, I saw every phase of it at Konia Khans and it might well have been in the desert routes of Samarkand.

When men's appetites were appeased, and many had spread their beddings near their animals and perhaps had their last pull at the narghile of the innkeeper, a satisfied air seemed to pervade the Serai, till most were either dozing over their sacks of wheat or lay behind them like heaps already asleep. Upon this peaceful scene the rising moon cast its soft light, inch by inch as it were the darkness melted away, near objects became clearer, the minarets of the mosques emerged from dimness and stood in bold relief. Beyond an occasional bark of a dog or distant sounds of hoof-beats of the night patrol, the town was plunged in deep slumber. A true rest indeed for a caravan that had wended its way every foot of the rocky defiles of old Asia.

But as I wanted to see something of the place at night I sauntered along a half sleepy street in the outskirt of the town. Smoky lamps were burning in a wayside café. At the entrance a gramophone record wailed, many cups of

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coffee were being quaffed by the wayfarers, and presently I joined them.

As I was sipping my lemonade I was struck by the appearance of a man sitting at the next table, indeed I was fascinated by his beard, which seemed to me the most theatrical of hirsute appendages I had ever distrusted. That it was "by Clarkson," as they say on London programmes, I could scarcely doubt, and when he rose and sat down beside me, I was quite taken aback. He introduced himself as "an old school-fellow," but talked so effusively that I could not interpose a query as to the identity of the scholastic establishment which had had the honour of our joint education. He informed me that he had followed my numerous writings in the Press with deep interest, and after many oleaginous compliments, inquired my opinion of "our President, the Ghazi." I replied that I had none, that I left the opinions of the kind to natives of the country, and that, as a mere cosmopolitan, I had found it unhealthy to make free with great names in public cafés. He then compared the British Legation building in Angora with the handsomeness of an anti-British "Diplomatic House," to the detriment of the former.

"Ah, ha, my noble friend," thought I, "so that is how the wind veers?"

"And how is your town looking?" I asked suddenly.

He stammered, "I never was there in my life, in the town to which you allude," he stammered.

"Well, if you *will* speak Turkish with a Russian accent," I ventured. The shot was a bold one, but it got home. He grew pink and blustered.

"I speak as good Turkish as you do," he growled. "In any case, you're a Cossack, one of those wretched traitors . . ."

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THE FRIDAY MOSQUE AT BASRA

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" Indeed," I said quietly. " Traitors to whom ? "

He gnashed his teeth. " No, you're not a Cossack," he admitted. " A Cossack would never drink lemon-squash ! Hanged if I can place you ! "

" I am in a more fortunate position, my friend," I retorted, " because I can place *you* all right. You'll forgive me, but the next time you buy a beard, be careful that it matches your moustache."

He fairly writhed, rose without another word, and stamped out of the room, but, unluckily, I was not finished with him yet, for when I returned to my khan, I noticed to my supreme annoyance that he had taken up his quarters in the common sleeping-room there.

I took not the slightest notice of him, and was soon asleep, despite the silvery moonshine which poured into the shutterless room. It must have been a little after midnight that I was awakened by a most tremendous hubbub. Someone had discharged a revolver, and in a moment the room resounded with the staccato noise of firearms. The sound roused my Afghan fighting spirit, and crying out, " Is this a private fight, or can anyone join in ? " I drew my gun, and prepared to blaze away. But a man near me, afraid evidently of my intention, held up his hand warningly.

" Hold, brother ! " he cried, " we're not shooting at each other. *We're shooting at the moon !* "

I rubbed my eyes to make sure that I was not floundering through a particularly absurd dream.

" The moon ! " I said. " Are you all crazy ? "

Peering through the open window, I saw a disc of velvety blackness overlapping the silver edge of the lunar sphere. Then I remembered the Turkish superstition that an eclipse of the moon is thought to be due to the

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efforts of Sheitan, or the devil, to swallow the luminary wholesale, and that the only way to deter him from doing so is to fire at his shadow. When I realized this, I burst out laughing so boisterously that the marksmen around me grew angry, and rebuked me sternly. But I laughed on. The bare idea of grown men battering away at a planet simply tickled me to death.

It was then that my vindictive acquaintance saw his opportunity and seized it.

"You hear this man?" he cried. "He scoffs at your beliefs and you stand there and listen to his laughter like a pack of cowards. I don't believe he is a Moslem. In any case Turkey is no place for such a blasphemer."

"Neither is it a stamping-ground for a rascally spy like you," I shouted, my blood now fairly up. "I happen to be a good Moslem and can prove it, not a wretched atheist like you. No, keep quite still, my friend, or I'll drill absolutely the neatest little hole ever a Browning made through what you are pleased to call a brain."

This was quite a long speech for me, and at the close of it he looked rather upset. None of the men present offered to help him, indeed they all looked very much askance at him.

"This is outrageous," he said hoarsely. "What are you going to do?"

"I am going to send for the police," I said, "and after what I tell them about that penny-blood beard of yours, I expect they'll ask you to be the star turn in a pop-gun party before shaving time to-morrow. So if you're sentimental about the moon, have a good look at it, for probably it won't be in the route you take when you leave the earth-plane."

"We talk," said someone, "and meanwhile Sheitan devours the moon."

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" True," cried another, " fire away, brothers ! "

They needed no further coaxing, and once more the fusillade blazed out. Seeing his chance, the Russian Agent dived for the open window. I sent a bullet after him, but fired too hastily and missed him by inches. Again and again I fired at his retreating figure, as he ran up the street, but to no purpose.

In the morning I approached the new part of the town and counted no less than 120 streets which establishes something of a record for a small place like Konia. They are now laying a broad road and style it Ferid Pasha Avenue. Going along this road first of all one comes to an unfinished mosque called the Mosque of Agriculture. Its presence there, so forlorn and yet so full of originality, reminded me greatly of the unfinished grand structure on the Carlton Hill of Edinburgh. A little further one sees the Municipality Park ; it belies its name, but the Lycée or the college for teachers is a decent building. Close to this lies an old barn of a government house, the Ottoman Bank, a post office, and a large square in front is the carriage stand, fortune-tellers' haunt, melon sellers' depot and the rendezvous of the gallants of the town all combined. Before venturing to explore further, I called a halt at the square to have a look at the man who wrote letters for his client and charged a fee of penny a page. Squatted on the ground sat the peasant near the Katib or the scribe pouring into the ears of the learned letter-writer all he wished him to write. " Yawash, Yawash : slowly, slowly," said the scribe looking up from his knees as he wrote holding the paper in his hand. Better qualified letter-writers were there too, and they not only provided themselves with seats but also gave a wooden stool to their clients. Their fees were,

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however, very high and only carriage drivers employed them. A little further away sat the fortune-tellers. Their faces wore mystery and their looks were certainly weird. On payment of a shilling as a fee one first read my hand, but he read not the palm of the hand, but fingers, then placing a little red sand in between my fingers he asked me to let it drop slowly and watched the stream of grains as it fell. With hums and ha's, telling of beads, calculations and frequent stroking of beard he read my future. If all he said is to come true then someone somewhere must be getting busy with his packing in order to leave his throne to me. The strong rugged face of the fortune-teller held me captive longer than I had anticipated to be in the square, and realizing that I hastened towards Azizuddin Mosque for the Friday prayer, specially because after the worship the dancing dervishes at the shrine of Hazrat Jalaluddin Rumi were to begin their monthly gathering and I was desirous to be at the ceremony.

After the prayer I approached the shrine of Hazrat Molana, whose Musnavi, it might be remembered, is translated into no less than 88 languages, and the saint himself is considered to be the greatest Safi of Islam. The religious importance of the Molana can be imagined when it is stated that no coronation of the Turkish Sultans was acceptable to the people till the head of these dervishes fastened the Imperial sword to the girdle of the monarchs of Turkey. A low door covered by a vine admits one inside the precincts of Malavi Khana, a quadrangle. There are small rooms or Hijras here for the disciples, and on the left hand side a door leads to the apartments of the Sheikh Chalibi, the descendant of the Saint ; also a small private graveyard associated with the name of the Grand Vizir, Ibrahim Pasha. Beyond this one reaches a marble paved

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courtyard railed off by brass bestrade. Then through a silver door one enters the hall, and climbing up by short steps to the platform where is situated the grave of Molana I noticed that the steps were covered with gold. A gorgeously embroidered pall of green satin covers the grave of the founder. Silver lamps hang from a ceiling of the chapel supported by thick columns covered with gesso and deep coloured red and gold. A candelabra, with sixteen candles, each weighing eighty pounds, is suspended from the centre of the chapel ceiling ; and last, but not the least, is a large copper bowl magnificently worked, a present from India, which stands in a corner. It is filled with water in the month of April, and the water is said to possess curative value, hence it is called the " Cup of April."

Adjoining this is the hall of Sama or music room where the disciples accompanied by the spiritual head danced in ecstasy holding their hands up and whirling as the music of the flute and little drums set to the words of the poems of the Molana was started. When the ceremony was in operation, what with the shrill tone of the lute, mellow thud of the small drums and the loud singing of Ho and Huq, I felt that the mere fact of going round and round ought to make one dizzy. I was, therefore, not surprised that it did not last much longer than twenty minutes. The early closing of the ceremony gave me an opportunity of seeing the library of the shrine, and although I was amazed at the number of manuscripts, totalling 1373, yet what I really marvelled at was the excellent condition of preservation in which some of the books actually used by the Molana 700 years ago lay in his study untouched and looked as if someone had been reading them a few minutes before. Five small domes cover the tomb and over that stands a minaret covered by green tiles.

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The legends of Perseus and the Gorgons about the ancient Iconium are remembered no more, but so long as the seminaries and the mosques, so characteristic of Koniote architecture of tile decoration repose in the Madrasa of Inja Minaray or the mosque of Allauddin, the greatness of the Seljuks will survive in the annals of the East. Those pyramidical domes and tapering octagon first conceived by Allauddin are to be seen to-day in towns as distant one from another as Bokhara, Lahore, Constantinople and Konia.

The day came only too soon to continue my trail down to Adana through the Tarsus mountains, through which gently flow streams of fairish sizes, and leave Konia wrapped in the glory of its early kings. Emerging from this bowery hollow and reaching the mighty Cilician Gates, I saw two great walls of mountains stern and stark as they stood towering in the horizon sandwiching the road and the river between their awe-inspiring pinnacles. So sadly worn is the inscription of Alexander as to defy deciphering ; and beyond as we proceeded the caravan was passing down on its bridle paths. Men with heavy eyes, larger noses and short beards, they were as true cousins of the Uzbegs of Central Asia as did my eye ever spy in Bokhara.

Women, mostly unveiled, sat shapelessly perched on the donkeys holding goats or children in their laps ; and leaving dromedaries to bubble past down the ravine at the Turkish frontier post, I rested in the Syrian soil and saw the evening light play upon the horizon. Little bits of clouds detaching themselves from the main mass caught the last rays of the setting sun; first they became bright red, then changed into orange and faded away into darker hues as if glowing fires rendered to ashes, dropped into the valley below, charred and lifeless.

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CHAPTER IV

SYRIA THE PICTURESQUE
BUMBLEDOM AND DEVIL-DANCERS

PERHAPS the most natural way for a traveller to journey southwards from Asiatic Turkey is to trek to French Syria and reach Aleppo.

Aleppo! Surely the name holds the quintessence of magic. Yet little of magic remains save the name. The French, the most practical of people, seem, when once away from the Gallic mystery of their own green land, to "lose their poetic nerve," so to speak, and to reduce everything to the deadliest system of workaday. Westerners of the West as they are, perhaps no race understands and appreciates the fact less that the East cannot, need not, adopt the French culture.

In any case they have not "improved" life in Syria. Most things there are drear and nasty. Their bullet-headed African troops are regarded as so many living insults by the stately Arabs—and their officials are railway porters tricked out in red epaulettes and a glittering front of brazen gamin impertinence.

I had taken care to land with nothing of a dutiable nature, yet my camera—that eternal bone of contention in the East, which, after years of familiarity, is still regarded as a casket of magic—at once brought me into collision with a particularly obnoxious official.

"Your photographic outfit is new," he barked, "so you

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must pay duty. And these tools (the *tools* were my photographic pins and attachments !) you'll have to pay for as well."

"But haven't you a detailed list of dutiable articles ?" I asked after nearly two hours of angry haggling. "Is there no law in Syria ?"

"I am the law," he spouted with a glance around to see if his associates were approving his heroics.

"Then all I have to say," I remarked, "is that you must share the weak vision with which Justice is proverbially credited."

Just as we were losing our tempers with a vengeance, the universal go-between slithered into the room, complete with smile. Immediately the atmosphere grew less electric, cigarettes were lit, and after a whispered colloquy, I was informed that I could "get through" for twenty gold pieces. Useless to argue, I beat him down to eighteen and a bottle of white wine and consumed my own smoke.

As one strolls through the streets of Aleppo one can hardly realize that four earthquakes, three demolitions and a dozen conquerors have passed over the city since 854 B.C. since it was first mentioned in history. Everywhere hum of life is heard, brisk buying, selling is going apace, and houses are being put up in approved Continental style. But those who jeer at the blessings that the French Mandate has brought upon Syria state that the extraordinary building activity that one sees in Aleppo is not a sign of reconstruction as concomitant of peace and prosperity, but rather the result of the depression of trade which has tied up the money and therefore people are investing in house property.

That deduction is both true and false, for the lack of import and export—Aleppo was one of the greatest exporia

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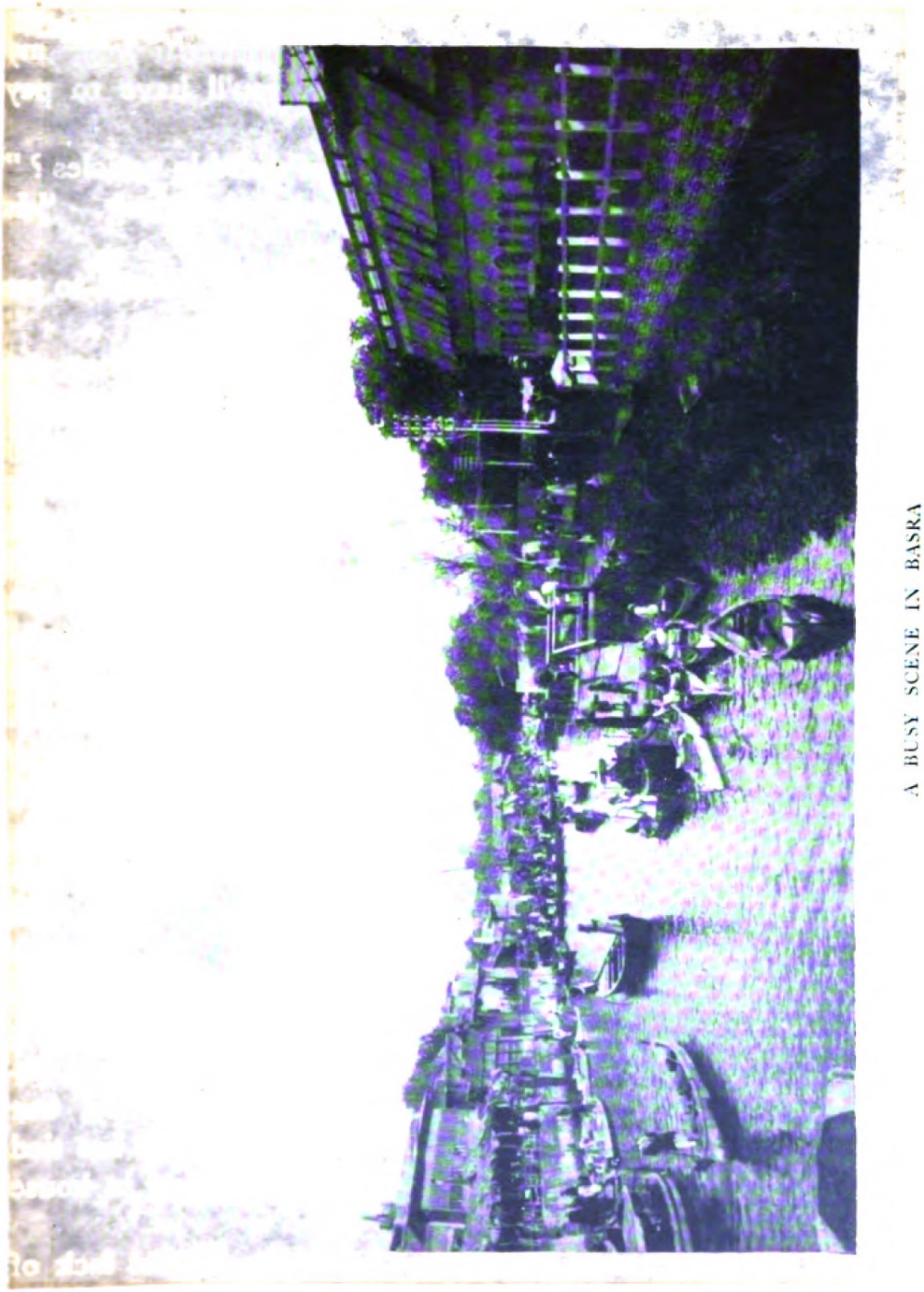

A BUSY SCENE IN BASRA

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of world trade—in that country is not on account of, but in spite of, the French. Practically every shop in Aleppo sells nothing but European wares; and generally speaking there is less Orient in Aleppo than was at Wembley Exhibition.

Walking along the narrow streets of the town, in the banks, post offices, motor garages or a wayside horse depot, you cannot fail to see scores of black soldiers with their round red caps. They understand little Arabic and care less about it. The country is held down by these French Colonials, and the people of Aleppo love them as much as the Druses love the French. Long lines of camels laden with the merchandise of the Middle East trekking to the markets of hoary Aleppo is only a lost memory.

A spirit of camaraderie prevails between the rulers and the ruled in Aleppo, and it creeps even into the official life of the people. At a bank, for instance, where I had waited two hours to get a traveller's cheque cashed, I was approached by a Bazaar Arab " Saraf " or money-changer who offered to give me a more favourable exchange than the bank. The official clerk of the bank merely smiled benignly through the cashier's bars and wished the peace of Allah to abide with the Syrian. He did not mind the fact that a bazaar saraf had actually deprived his bank a whole gold piece in exchange. All must live, he thought, poor and rich.

But although Aleppo is being modernized, European villas springing up and men exchanging European dress for the flowing robes, yet the life of the ancient city throbbed around the great citadel, grimly as it stands in the middle of the town, surrounded by a moat or artificial hill.

In the fading light of sunset the massive Gateway stands

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out like a great demon ready for flight, whilst Arab booth shopkeepers ply their little trades like pigmies before it. Climbing the outer tower I crossed a pretty bridge, where one has to crane one's neck to have the full view of the large gate tower and notice the narrow band of inscription and the iron relief of serpent's and lion's head. Cannon balls lay strewn behind the façade telling the tales of early Empires.

Negro soldiers guard the interior of the citadel ; the place inside is littered with ruins ; in an ancient marble bath donkeys of military transport were drinking water, whilst in the centre of the square a mosque lay dilapidated. When I went in I saw modern tables where once Moslems must have prayed, and the inscription stone which bore the name of the mosque was being used by a negro soldier to wash his clothes. None could blame him. He was neither a Moslem nor could he read, but he had found a good slab of marble as a convenient washing table. I wondered what the Indian Moslems would have said if such a thing had happened in " unhappy India." Walking towards the outlook tower I came upon the ruins of another old building and smelt the cooking of the French Colonial soldiers. It had the inscription of Sultan Salahuddin the great Moslem hero over the archway that emitted the smoke of the kitchens. You have to have a heart of stone not to be affected by it.

Before I left Aleppo to explore eastwards and travel to Antioch, I walked to the British War Monument, some five miles away. On and around that ridge, so says the monument, the last engagement in the Middle East took place during the Great War. Ghazi Mustafa Kamal personally took the command against the British forces on those low lying hills, and how he escaped with only

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a hundred surviving followers is a tale which like other acts of sheer bravado must lie in the official records of the belligerents.

In getting to Antioch from Aleppo, parched and rugged hills stand in rich red soil and ruins are met in abundance on the way. Gates, arches, remains of old Roman roads, and arcades mark the sites of Burj-Rakseh, Sermada and so forth till the fertile plains watered by Orontes brought me to the city of the Seleucidae, known to the world as Antioch, where pleasure was considered to be the only purpose of life.

After going through the narrow streets of Antioch, my first impression was that if Seleucus Nicator were to rise to-day he would scarcely recognize the city of his creation. How it has changed in 2000 years. The columns of streets which once supported double colonnades were lying half sunk in the earth and on one of them an Arab shepherd boy sat playing his reed. The palace of Trajan of old, where tiny gold carts containing red roses and pulled by two white pigeons plied between the King and the Queen. That scene appeared to me to be irreconcilable with life's activity as I saw it, for a haycart was rattling down the bridge of Orontes at the moment.

The river has not changed its beauty, nor yet the natural beauty, for the crocus grows wild amongst the ruins of Roman kings. In the history of Christianity Antioch has a rare place. On the slope of a hill some 200 yards from the centre of the city, St. Peter's church is indicative of the fact that vice and pleasure must disappear and piety and prayer must live for ever and ever. The church is not like any ordinary church, rather it is an enclosure on the side of a hill, and its door is kept locked. The surroundings of the town afford marvellous scenery, especially of the

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little waterfalls that go to swell the volume of Orontes, but scarcely do you go a hundred yards than you see a Roman sarcophagus half buried in earth, or a fragment of a column.

If it were not for the appearing and reappearing of tiny electric lights as the train from Aleppo negotiated the mountain turnings, I would have considered it a tiresome journey. But Beyreuth disappointed me with its utter lack of Eastern colour. The only consolation are the mountains of the Lebanon which rise in their loveliness tier upon tier close to the city. The city itself is unlike any other true Oriental town, tramways, motor-cars and noise are there to leave you in no doubt that "Civilization" has entered the Western gates of the Orient and means to stay there. But when I loaded and unloaded and was told that no less than a thousand steamships and double that number of sail boats enter the harbour, the hum and trade of the city was clear to me.

On the promenade I heard more French spoken than Arabic, and casinos were a cheap copy of the very lowest type of Continental cafés. The old Arab who hated the Can-Can and abhorred the Jazz is not to be seen at Beyreuth. I could not see an Arab dance. "There is no such thing here now," they said, "it has vanished with the Turkish ruler." Whether that was a compliment or otherwise may not matter now. But the social life of the town finds only one expression now in Beyreuth, and it is the casino and the pier.

Beyreuth, like Cairo, was once considered to be the intellectual home of the Near Eastern Arabs; this I endeavoured to find out for myself. No Oriental libraries or seminaries could I discover. Instead there is a totally foreign institution—foreign in language, religion and

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tradition—an American University which they first started as the Syrian Protestant College some sixty years ago. The planning of the buildings, parks, laboratories and boarding houses of this great institution does honour to the American enterprise. Hundreds of students from all over the Moslem world receive training in Arts and Medicine, and it can justifiably boast of having produced more than one brilliant graduate. But it is a missionary college all the same ; and must remain so if it is to continue its work.

The only other district of Beyreuth that gripped my imagination was the sandy acres that encroach upon the city towards the road to Damascus. Here avenues of pines—some are 300 years old—which were planted by Fakhruddin, the Druse king, are like a fairy's dream in moonlight. A drive of about eighty miles on that road brought me to regions which stand not like bare crags and peaks but appear as if wondrous slopes of green velvet stretch to the other end of the earth.

Actively busy in commerce though Beyreuth certainly is to-day, yet I had felt that, like Aleppo, its trade must fast diminish on account of the railway to Tripoli. Signs of this indeed are already noticeable, for Beyreuth seems to be devoting more attention to the tourists and to those who travel from the Middle East on the desert route. Here and there in the bazaars, on the promenade and at most unlikely places, one might notice bunches of tourists lingering about Beyreuth with their familiar " plus-fours " and inevitable cameras.

With the increase in the number of sightseers in Beyreuth the comfort of its hotels has not kept pace. Thirty shillings a day is asked for ramshackle rooms, and for food it is as well to buy dog biscuits in preference to the hotel fare.

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The same, of course, cannot be said of Baalbek, a visit to which I would not have missed for worlds. Driving over the Lebanons with hair-raising speed I journeyed from Beirut to the city where the Sun God was worshipped, and where also temples are dedicated to Mercury and Venus.

This small town of little more than 5000 inhabitants has good accommodation for travellers ; both the hotels and lodging houses are comfortable and reasonable in charge. As the air was extremely cold, the water of the tiny brooks was frozen, and from that I could not doubt that many wealthy Syrians and Egyptians made the place their summer resort. But it is not only the climate which recommended Baalbek to me ; for I was hungrier for knowledge than pleasure. I wanted to see the Temples of the Pagan Gods. The great Temple of Jupiter is gone, but six enormous columns of the Peristyle which are more than sixty feet in height I could see before ever I saw anything of the town of Baalbek. In the fading light of the evening these yellow stone pillars look like columns of gold. In girth they were as thick as the outstretched arms of myself and my motor driver.

The Temple of Bacchus is probably the best ruin that I have set eyes upon ; standing on its own stylobate it looks like an enormous box with columns running around it. The leaf work on the entrance depicting vine and foliage ought to have been enough to " intoxicate " the worshippers of that god of pleasure. But what surpassed my imagination were the gigantic blocks of stone which are built in the wall of the ruined temple. Who transported them in one mass of 64 feet in length and 10 feet in thickness to the height of over 25 feet ? The place is a marvel to say the least of it.

But the picture of Baalbek would not be complete if I

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did not describe the views of the present-day denizens of the place near the Temple.

Lingering by the six enormous columns of the great temple of Jupiter—all that remain of that glorious edifice —I fell to talking with an Arab miller of the mighty past.

" Mighty past ! " he ejaculated, with a most suspicious intonation, " Mighty devils, Effendi ! Don't you have anything to do with it. Don't even look at it too long. The whole place is a devil's grave. I tell you, with my own eyes I have seen the stars rise from inside the stone pillars yonder, and I prayed to Allah to drive the evil ones away, as they frighten my customers from the mill."

" Where Allah is no evil things can come," I assured him. " If you are really a true slave of Allah the devils can have no power over you. Men, my friend, make their own devils. Deal honestly with your customers and say your prayers regularly, and the devils will keep clear of you."

" Alas," he said, " some devils are stronger than prayer."

" Especially when they assume the circular shape of good French money, I suppose," I hinted, whereat he laughed.

After some truly fascinating tours in the Baalbek area, I trekked back to Beyreuth, and although a little of that city went a long way for me before, I resolved to stay there a few days longer, till an adventurous episode turned my departure southwards. It was due to my eagerness to see the night life of Beyreuth.

Most of that day I had spent in reading some old Arabic manuscripts, and when the gay band struck up some unknown French melody in a nearby café, I strolled to the casino, where it was that I met the man with patent leather boots.

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Strange how the Western Moslem, Turk, Syrian or Egyptian runs to patent leather! But these were of Paris itself, I think, and extraordinarily resplendent. I had ventured a few silver coins at faro, and had lost, as I expected to lose.

"If Monsieur will pardon me," he said in French, "I have a system."

"So did Adam, I believe," was my careless reply. "I have one myself, only I'm not such a fool as to use it."

"Capital," he laughed, "capital. I see Monsieur has a sense of humour." Then, breaking into Arabic, he lowered his tone.

"Perhaps the Effendi would care to see something more interesting than faro."

"Depends what it is," I parried. "If you have anything really worth seeing, I'm ready. But if it's merely some stale beastliness I shan't give you a franc."

"It's a Senegalese devil-dance—those French Colonial soldiers, you know. They're really all devil worshippers, and this is their big night. You shouldn't miss it. I can show you the whole thing from the back window of a friend's house."

This seemed the right sort of stuff, so off we went down nasty lanes and past noisome passages till we came to a wooden door, at which he knocked. The door was opened by a slouching old man who seemed unaccountably scared, and we trundled up a flight of rickety stairs and into a low dark room.

"Put out your cigarette," advised my guide, "and look through the curtains. But please be careful they don't see you. For a stranger to see these rites is to court death, and a rather horrid death at that."

I peered through the curtains, but at first could see

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WATER-MELON SELLERS AT BASRA

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nothing but a crowd of moving shadows. As my eyes grew accustomed to the gloom, I could see that the shadows gradually formed themselves into a ring. They were Senegalese soldiers in their red caps, encircling a weird figure attired in what seemed to be a black robe decorated with tufts of goat's hair and wearing a dreadful distorted mask, evidently intended to represent a devil or fiend. Before him, on a flat stone in the deserted garden-space, lay a heap of bones, small snakes and frogs, the contents, I take it, of the devil-doctor's bag. He was swaying to and fro, beating rhythmically and monotonously on a little drum, and looking more closely, I could see that the men who surrounded him were also swaying to the beat of the tympanum.

Suddenly an agonized clucking arose, and he produced from somewhere a white fowl—a cock, I think—and with a dexterous twist, wrung its neck. The circle swayed more violently, and I could see the whites of the eyes of the negro "chorus" rolling convulsively. They sprang to their feet, and began to shuffle round the witch doctor from right to left in a clumsy dance.

The fun now grew fast and furious. With yells and shouts the Senegalese dancers quickened their pace, and began to hop and skip around their prophet in the wildest of actions. That they were in a state bordering on hysteria was obvious.

I'm afraid my insatiable curiosity has got me into more hot water than would provide baths for the world's unwashed, and now it was nearly my undoing. Throwing caution to the winds, I raised the curtain, and despite the terrified protest of my guide, thrust my head almost out of the window the better to catch the frenzy of the scene. Almost immediately I was spotted. The dance came to an

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abrupt and confused conclusion, and such a howl of wrath arose from the worshippers in the courtyard below that I confess I shuddered.

With a babel of guttural cries and execration they broke up and dashed at the back entrance of the house.

"Run for your life," yelled my guide. "No, not downstairs. You'll meet them coming up. This way!"

We darted out of the room into the passage and into the room opposite. Making for the window, we fumbled in terrified confusion at the lattice, but it was old and rusty and the catch stuck. I could hear the mob crashing against the door downstairs like madmen, howling out threats in their barbarous lingo.

Then the door gave way, and I heard the exasperated savages tumbling upstairs. In desperation, I ran full tilt at the lattice, and crashed my foot into it. But, so fierce had been my onslaught that not only did I smash the slats to flinders, but went clean through! Executing a somersault, I fell heavily into the street, and not being exactly a Douglas Fairbanks, landed badly on my head.

Dazed and partially stunned, I was gathering myself up when a dark shape passed me. It was my guide, who had dropped more circumspectly from the window. He seized me by the arm and lugged me to my feet, just as a knife whizzed past my ear. The sound of a whizzing knife has always annoyed me, and using choice expressions made in England, I fumbled for my gun.

"Run, run!" cried my cicerone. "They're getting out of the window!"

But by this time I would have faced a whole battalion of Senegalese, with drums and banners complete. A big fellow slithered out of the window and down the wall, but before he could make for me, I had already fired.

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Down they came, out of the little window, like ants out of a nest. But they hung back. The Senegalese are not permitted to carry arms when off duty, and well it was for me that they were not. I fired a second shot by way of warning, and awed by this, they kept circling round, looking for a chance to break in.

"Come on, you black sons of Sheitan!" I cried in Arabic, my Afghan fighting blood fairly up, "which of you will go to Hell for the others?"

I don't think they understood me, but just then a sergeant dropped from the window, a small active negro, with bustling authority written all over him, a product of Frankish discipline. He turned on the men and rated them soundly. What he said, of course, I don't know, but it seemed to have a salutary effect. Then he came forward to me.

"What were you doing up there?" he asked irritably. "Surely you know better than to come into our quarters?"

"I'm a stranger," I said pacifically, "and was visiting my friend here. If I'd known the district was a dance-ground for howling savages, I shouldn't have come. You can't expect not to attract attention by a jamboree like that, you know."

"It's their worship and it's permitted by the authorities," he explained rather lamely. "What would you have?"

"Something a little less vociferous, since you ask me," I replied crossly. "You Africans are the limit. You come into the heart of Islam, and bring your own devildom with you, just as an Irishman takes his shillelagh with him to Boston (I'm afraid the allusion was lost on him), but you can tell your heathen friends that if they follow me one step, you'll have to hunt Beirut for white poultry to-morrow as a peace-offering to their spooks. There'll be a corner in crested Leghorns in this port to-morrow if they as much

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as step on my shadow, for what I've seen them do in our mosques has made me, as a good Moslem, want to start a holy war on my own. Get that ? "

He got it, and I got away. Bluff is the best argument with the guileless sons of Africa. But that guide mimicked the aspen for the rest of the evening. He tried most of the drinks the cafés provided as a nerve tonic at my expense, whilst I, as a teetotaller, watched him with a fascinated interest. But the more he drank, the worse his shivering memories of the tight corner we had come through seemed to grow, and at last I left him, scarcely able to stand up in his splendid patent leathers.

Just as I was leaving the last noisy café, I cannoned into the Senegalese sergeant. He grinned all over his face, and saluted, and as he evidently had something to say, I halted.

" Monsieur," he said very earnestly, " if you will take the advice of a friend, you will leave Beyreuth early to-morrow. There are things in that . . . that religion . . ."

" Call things by their proper names," I said sharply.

" Well, that—er—that *dance*, let us say, which scarcely bears thinking about. I've been in Paris and have seen civilization, and I know what you feel. But remember, you're dealing with men who only a few months ago were living in a swamp country which they believed to be full of ghosts and bugaboos. You can't reason with haunted men—nor with their prophet."

I know good advice when I hear it, and I took it by making straight for Palestine within the shortest time possible.

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CHAPTER V

IN THE LAND OF SPIRITUALITY

TO me, as a Moslem, the City of Jerusalem ranks second in sanctity only to Mecca. The people of my faith after performing their religious ceremonies at Mecca year by year make pilgrimages to the Holy City of Jerusalem. According to our belief, the Prophet Mohamed "flew on his white charger to meet God," from a red stone of this city. That slab is entombed here in the Dome of the Rock. And here, too, one of our great prophets, Jesus Christ, preached the sacred Bible to the world. His mother, Mary, too, has a great reverence shown to her in our beliefs. It is, therefore, sacrilegious in the eyes of Islam to term Jerusalem as anything but holy. When I trekked to that Sacred City this spirit filled my mind.

As I drew nearer and nearer Jerusalem a mingled feeling of joy and respect came upon me. The passing crowd, a living, pulsating pageant of early religion, and the Holy Dome of the Rock framed in the sycamore avenue spoke of a different epoch.

Giant bells were tolling somewhere, but their clang struck upon my ears in no material tone. "So this is Al Quids !—Jerusalem, the Holy," I said, "of which Allah Himself speaks in His Book"; and lifted my hands in prayer of thanksgiving, for had the Prophet of Mecca not made his night journey from Jerusalem to the Celestial

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Throne, and the dead here risen to life at the Messiah's bidding ?

There was a nip in the sunlit air of the city as I walked from shrine to shrine, during that Christmas week, negotiating its narrow bazaars, swarming with nationals of all countries from Poland to Java.

" Sabahal Khair ! May thy morning be peaceful ! " shouted a Christian pilgrim guide to a Moslem shopkeeper, but his reply wishing the same felicity was drowned by the high-toned inquiry of one of the party about an Arab silk gown that hung in the shop. That lady pilgrim would not pay twenty dollars for it. She could buy the kind cheaper in Broadway.

Hurriedly they passed on, scarcely noticing the Fifth Station of the Cross. But I lingered on, meditating about the agony of Jesus down the stone-paved via Dolorosa. What history has that route of arches not made for man, and yet the donkey-driver unconcernedly sold water down the lane and the Jewish priests with their love-locks walked past the scenes on which Europe's civilization is built.

Through the arcaded bazaars where you can purchase anything from an ancient Damascus blade to a fashionable necktie passed Christian Jews and Moslems, dressed almost alike in the long flowing garb of the Arab ; only a few modernized Arabs wore European dress. Here and there a Greek priest with tall black hat, or a Jew with a rimmed fur cap, glides mysteriously round the corner ; or again Moslem divines with their flapping coats reaching down to their ankles wearing be-turbaned fezes, hurry on to the Mosque of Omar. Ponies, sheep and goats jostle with the crowd but the camel ignoring humanity makes his own way, or stops to nibble at the carrots at a vegetable shop. Beyond

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lay the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, grim and steeped in the holiness of ages.

It is impossible not to be impressed by the sight of Christendom's most holy place ; and after buying a few wax tapers from a shop before entering the precincts, I observed that it was a Moslem doorkeeper who kept the gate of this church as an hereditary privilege since Khalifa Omar's time.

Along one side of the wall of the court sat beggars chanting ; and a few blind men too had gathered there, who believing in the curative value of the " pilgrims' breaths," solicited that " breath " as every devotee emerged from the church. Thus they hoped to regain their sight. Small Arab boys tried to sell to me sacred pictures from Hebron, glass bracelets and toys made of olive wood.

Immediately inside the church the pilgrims bowed low, many kissed the Stone of Anointing, then, respectfully, they passed on. In the Rotunda square pillars support a dome—which having been damaged by the earthquake, was then under repair—and although the interior might be a disappointment as compared with what one sees in European cathedrals, it is not exactly masonry that is of consequence. The spirit of the place mattered to me. Upon one of the galleries they were chanting so beautifully that the accompaniment of a musical instrument would have killed its soul. Swarthy Egyptian Christians clad in their native costume sang so emotionally before the Sepulchre in Arabic, that I felt how wrong it is to regard Jesus as the white man's Christ.

The sepulchre where Jesus was laid, although no more than twenty-four feet long, fifteen feet wide and not very high, appeared to me a mighty thing. The heart of a great religion lay there. But entering the marble antechamber,

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and stooping under a four-feet high doorway, so that one stood in the Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre itself, sensations rose in my mind which made me realize how great the influence of Sacredness can be. A Greek monk stood motionless and mute, eyeing a peasant youth who had placed his rosary upon the rock-hewn Sepulchre. Tears rolled down the boy's cheeks as he knelt beside the tomb.

Outside again I counted eighty people going in and out, in less than ten minutes. The shrine was never empty. But judging by their dresses, the pilgrims appeared poor. Had wealth, I wondered, kept the rich away from this Cradle of Christianity ?

Wrapped in the atmosphere of these experiences, I zigzagged my way down the street, and saw the most impressive sight of all when old men and young knelt in prayer at a Station of the Cross, whilst Moslem guards led a procession of Franciscan Fathers through the crowded bazaars. This practice of the Moslem guards leading a Christian procession is but another survival of the time of Khalifa Omar's entry into Jerusalem in 637, who, not only gave liberty of worship to Christians, but actually made his co-religionists responsible for the safety of the Christians and their Churches.

Walking past a narrow lane I came upon the Church of St. Anne, close to which is the Pool of Bethseda. A White Father explained about its discovery in 1871, and conversed with me in my native Persian. Beyond it is the grave of Bibi Maryam, the Mother of Christ, whose memory is also sacred to us, the Moslems. And further on are those peaceful-looking olive trees in the Garden of Gethsemane, the twisted trunks of which could now tell me little of Christ's great tragedy.

Wandering round the city I came upon the Jews' Wailing

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THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE AND REST-HOUSE AT DAMASCUS

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Place. Superficially, it is nothing but a block of stones some fifteen feet long to about five feet high, the celebrated western wall of the Temple ; but spiritually it seems to have a deep significance to those who clung to it more fondly than a mother clings to an only child. It was Friday, white-bearded men, shaven and shorn youths, women and children, wept against the stones. A woman cried so bitterly that in another moment I could have joined her. Some of the mourners bought holy oil from a man near-by and lit tiny earthen lamps in the broken places of the wall. His eyes, too, had a sad look, and in between his busy moments of selling oil, he helped a few old men in saying their prayers.

Just behind the Moslem quarter, I entered the Noble Sanctuary of the Dome under which lies a large slab of rock from where the Prophet Mohamed is believed to have journeyed heavenwards one particular night, and thus rendered it holy to the Moslems. This vast courtyard has seven gates. Since Kalif Abdul Melik built the dome of this edifice and the Sultan Salahuddin restored it, the shrine of the Red Rock has seen pilgrims from every part of the globe. I reached the building by eight flights of steps. Porticoes stand gracefully in indescribable glory at the top of each. Coloured tiles cover the octagonal sides and the cupola rises to one hundred and eight feet. The Holy Koran is inscribed in Arabic upon it. Simplicity is blended with magnificence around the Red Rock inside, chandeliers and lamps that hang in the arches are but material signs of devotion, and the pious history of my faith hovers on that mass of solid rock, apparent only to the eyes of the faithful.

There is nothing like it in the world to a Moslem, unless it be the Shrine of Mecca. The intense silence moved me to tears, the message of the Prophet I felt forcibly,

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all else was void. In the heart of that stone was buried annals of more than a thousand years.

The Mosque of Al Aksa facing the Dome has charms and sanctity of its own, because by praying in it Moslems may acquire much merit : and the Koran speaks of it very frequently. Dreamy-eyed Uzbek pilgrims from Bokhara lingered there with the Arab brothers of Islamic fraternity. Others from India were just as at home. Geographical disparity of our home lands we did not feel, as we stood facing towards Mecca when the Muezzin called the prayers. The same bending and swaying, the same chanting and mutely lifting up of upturned palms we engaged in as anywhere else. A Moslem has really no nationality other than his religion. We could not understand each other's language. Yet as Moslem pilgrims we were of one fold, one patron, one ideal, in that sacred city. Then they showed me the site where the Moslem pilgrims walked in procession, holding banners and displaying active manifestations of festivity to Nebi Musa.

In meditation and prayer day passed day in Jerusalem until the Christian pilgrim tourists filled the town. But the fact of " doing pilgrimage " of some did not appeal to me, and whilst this rush was on, I journeyed to Jericho to avoid it. Returning to the Holy City on the Christmas Day, I walked to Bethlehem. A thin rain was falling but I walked on. To ride to the birthplace of Jesus was to deprive myself of the spirituality of the occasion ; and truly marvellous was the spectacle of the procession going through the streets to the Church of Nativity. The deep devotional air was unmistakable. As I trekked back to Jerusalem some monks were also marching back with their orphan wards.

Standing just near the Chapel of Ascension on the Mount of Olives, I noticed how true it is to call Jerusalem

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" a city on a hill." From that spot I could see the panorama of religions entombed in their buildings. A plateau rose in front of me from right to left marking the Harem Sharief, the Dome of the Rock towering above its surroundings. Beyond that, blocks of houses forming the David Street carried the gaze as far as the tower of the Church of Holy Sepulchre. The new building Notre de France lay at the furthest end. Past it, a road like a white ribbon stretched away to Jaffa. And peering down through the branches of olive trees on to the valley below where the religious dramas of man have so often been enacted, I noticed the atmosphere of peacefulness that now floated over it all. These were not buildings, stones, brick and mortar ; rather each was a book to me ; and when I saw a woman carrying a conical shaped earthern water vessel on her head to her husband who was ploughing the fields in the olive grove, how well she stepped into the picture, I thought, of this restful scene.

Immersed in these thoughts, I must have sat long there under an olive tree, for the sun's rays were already paling upon the minarets, and bells had begun to toll from a dozen churches, whilst the Moslem priests called the faithful to prayer. It was, indeed, a struggle to tear oneself away from the scenes of that spiritual detachment to the tawdry glamour of modern life ! This pilgrimage has left a deep impression upon my mind, and sitting amongst the hurly-burly of superficial existence of town life of Europe, I do not need to close my eyes to see the moving picture-film of the Noble City with her great drama writ large upon her face. That shall ever stand out in my memory.

In The Second Holiest Place of Islam.

It is truly said that one half of the world knows nothing

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of what the other half is doing, for despite the fact that an event of an international character happened when King Abdullah opened the second holiest place in Islam only a short time ago in Jerusalem, little or nothing about this important event seems to have been conveyed to this country. In order to appreciate its significance, a few points have to be mentioned here, as I saw many sights of Islamic interest and devotion. The City of Jerusalem ranks as the holiest place of Islam only after Mecca. The Muslims prayed towards it before they were commanded to direct their prayers Kaba-ward, for in the heart of this Sacred City lies the Harem Sharief, where the Rock and the Aksa Mosque are situated. Again and again the Koran mentions the holiness of these two places, so that many pilgrims, after they have been to Mecca, trek to Jerusalem to bend low to these shrines drenched as they are with the Islamic traditions of centuries. Now, these sanctified buildings were greatly damaged ; the Mosque of Aksa especially was in peril of a complete collapse. The general deterioration, which beset all buildings, coupled with a lack of regular repairs before the Great War and finally the earthquake that shook Jerusalem three years ago, made it imperative that the Supreme Muslim authorities, under the able guidance of the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, attended to the restoration of the Mosque immediately.

It was found that the Dome of the Aksa was leaning to one side to the extent of about thirty-five kilometers. First of all the German architects, who built the beautiful railway station at Hyder Pasha in Constantinople, were invited to undertake the task ; but they refused to handle it, thinking it beyond their skill, and ultimately Kamal Bey, a Turkish architect, with the help of two Arabs working for six years, accomplished the restoration. The cost up to the present

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amounts to something like £70,000, and if the building is to regain its former glory, it is estimated that a sum in the neighbourhood of £100,000 and more is required. Throughout the Muslim world people gave contributions ; the largest donation was one of £33,000 from the ex-King Husain of Mecca, his son gave £10,000, and two large sums from India of £8,000 and £7,000 came from Moulana Tahir Safiddin and the Nizam respectively. The King of Egypt together with the Waqf donated £10,000.

Practically all labour employed was Palestinian, as also the material. Close to the Harem Sharief, I had often seen Arab boys and their elders hard at work in connection with their many crafts for the restoration of the Mosque. They worked with an earnestness almost approaching religious fervour ; they sang sacred verses as they worked. In a large airy room hundreds of them were busy, some cutting the marble slabs, others drawing and working beautiful floral designs or Koranic inscriptions on stone. Further on one saw copper with gold leaf being hammered into patterns to be put on the wooden pillars ; but nothing interested me more than the example of the pure Arab art as, working deftly with small knives, they cut floral designs in a cement slab in a sort of delicate lace-work, on the reverse of which they studded pieces of coloured glass. These were the windows of the Mosque, and when they were placed high up in their positions, in the half-light of the interior of the building, the effect was remarkably beautiful. They appeared to me to be like the fine marble filigree work of the Taj Mahal of Agra, with the finest effect of a stained glass window.

Neither the beauty of this, nor that of the Dome of the Rock can be appreciated to the full if you do not visit every nook and corner of the whole area of about ninety

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acres which comprises the Harem Sharief wherein these shrines are situated. To do this, you must enter by the way of the Cotton Merchants' Bazaar. The whole strikes upon your eyes as a fairy dreamland, a plateau on which towers the mighty Dome: arches are seen here and there, cypress trees peep out between the buildings and minarets, the long-robed and beturbaned priests move about in all solemnity, the faithful are hurrying to the mosque, others bending low in silent meditation, and all is quiet, awe-inspiring, a world of its own. Presently a Muezzin mounts the minaret at the end of the esplanade and calls the faithful to prayer, his chant taken up by others. "Allah is Great, Allah is Great . . ." they repeat in the four corners of the vast space, and worshippers swell the ranks in the noble sanctuary of Aksa. A thousand voices are hushed to silence, only the Imam recites passages from the Koran to the end of the service. Then they emerge from the Mosque and enter the Dome for meditation or sit mutely twisting the beads of their rosaries in the low-roofed rooms around the plateau of the Rock.

History has it that Solomon erected his Temple here, till the Chaldæans destroyed it. Seventy years after that it was rebuilt, only to be destroyed again; but Herod repaired it and gave it to the Jews, during whose occupancy Jesus, being of the tribe of Judah, could not enter it further than other Jews. In the court of that Temple, too, the infant Christ was presented by His Mother, and ultimately from that place, according to the Muslim belief, the Prophet Mohamed made his nightly journey to the Throne of Allah. The Caliph Abdul Malik caused this Dome to be built over the rock, but the original was destroyed by an earthquake and rebuilt in A.D. 1022, but for its later glories the name of Sultan Salahuddin is prominently mentioned.

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You climb eight flights of steps to reach the esplanade, passing through a beautiful portico step on the plateau. On the Day of Judgment, so Muslim belief has it, the scales to weigh human actions would be suspended from these porticoes of the Dome of the Rock. The octagonal building of about 180 feet in diameter is surmounted by a huge cupola of nearly eighty feet. First of all you step on a marble slab to enter on its four doors. Its interior beggars description. Rays coloured by the stained glass of the windows penetrate the half-lighted interior. In passing the light makes the gorgeous gold-work glitter in the lining of the Dome and the whole play of colour blends with the grey-brown colour of the Rock. It strikes one mute with wonderment. What history lies buried in the heart of that piece of stone! That under it lies the Ark of Noah, that the roaring waters which have no depths are below it, that it has the impress of the hand of Angel Gabriel, who stayed the rock, are all beliefs of the Muslims.

Close to it is the Mosque of Aksa, which Christian writers assert has the appearance of a basilica, and was founded in 536 by Justinian in honour of the Blessed Virgin; but all authentic record is against this, for even Ferguson admits the Muslim view that it was built by Caliph Abdul Malik in place of what remained of its former wooden structure. As you enter it, you cannot help being struck by the purposeful erection of its naves and aisles. It is curious in the sense that it seems a combination of various architectures round which the Arab conception of a sacred edifice is evolved. Some capitals, for instance, show forms of acanthus leaf, arches are wider, but connecting beams are definitely Arab.

Salahuddin's restoration is marked by an inscription dating 1186, and the decoration of the Dome is unlike that

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of the Dome of the Rock. Prayer niches flanked by marble are unique in beauty and craftmanship. The pulpit is of wood, wood of the cedars of Lebanon which Salahuddin imported ; and from its skilful execution one does not wonder to hear that the craftsman who made it was raised to the highest office of the realm. That sort of work I saw done in ivory and mother-o'-pearl on wood carving in the villages near Adana in Asiatic Turkey as well, but nothing of it reaches the excellence of the pulpit in the Aksa Mosque. It is this mosque which the King of Transjordan opened on the birthday of the Prophet recently in the presence of the representatives of the Muslim world in Jerusalem.

In every quarter of the Harem there is always some place to hold your interest. Solomon's stables under this mosque is the object of wonderment still ; there is, too, the place marked as the resting-place of the murderers of Thomas à Becket ; whilst another spot is pointed out as the Throne of Solomon : and what of the Gateway of the Chain from which, it is believed, a chain ascends to high heaven, but is visible, it is said, only to the spiritually gifted. Every corner of this plateau has its traditions and a place in the hearts of men which cannot be effaced ; " It is sanctified with holiness only second to Mecca," in the estimation of one fifth of the human race owing allegiance to Islam.

Easter in Jerusalem through Muslim Eyes.

I realized the hold of Christian spirituality over the materialism of to-day only after seeing the Holy Week of Easter in Jerusalem. In that city of devotion, my mind, trained to penetrate the surface, appreciated for the first time how truly the religious life of entire Christendom centres around a mighty ideal—an ideal which lies in the Church of Holy Sepulchre : for year by year during the

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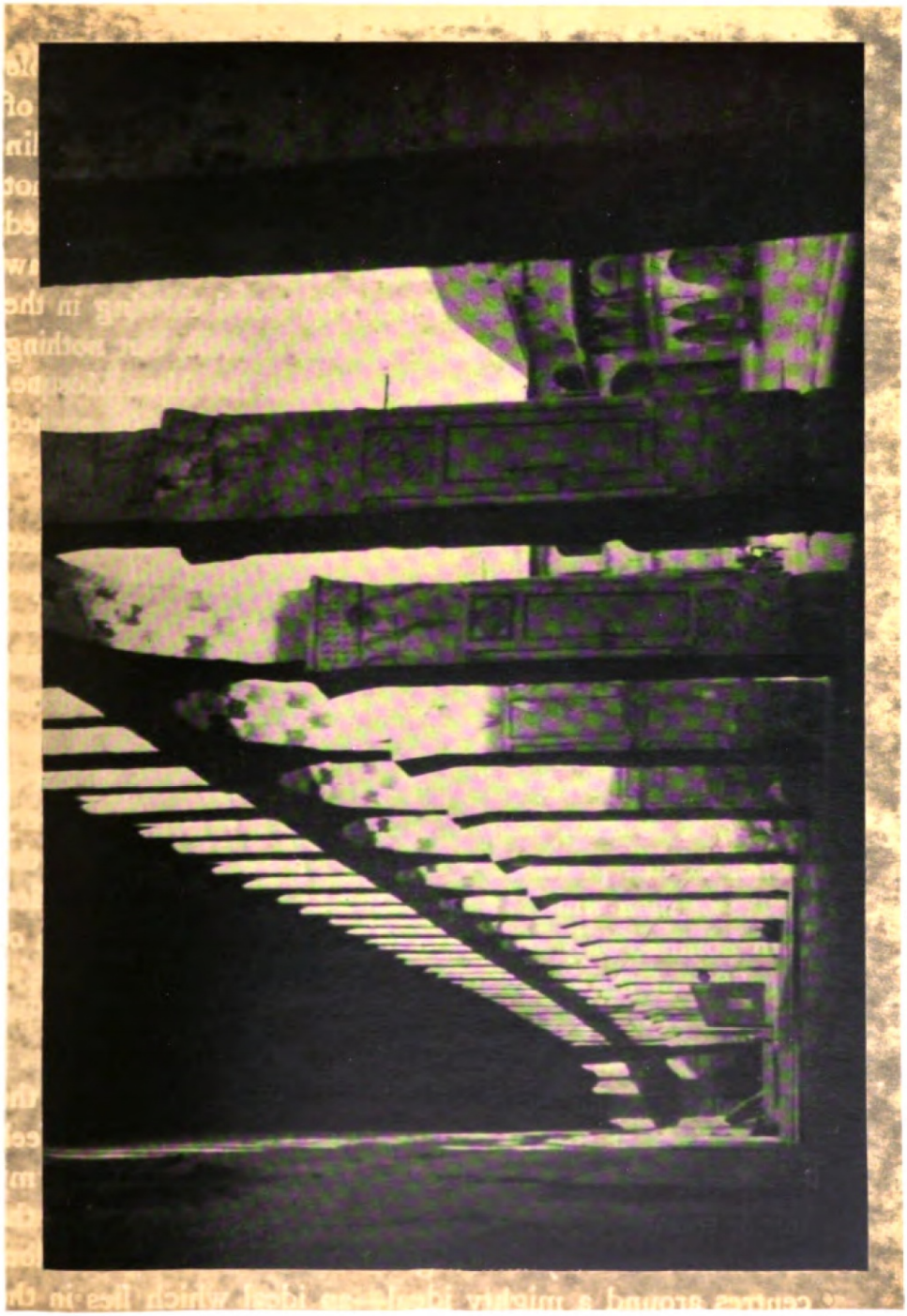

IN THE ANCIENT MOSQUE OF OMMAYAD, DAMASCUS

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Easter week in Jerusalem a very serious chapter of world's history is reproduced ; and it is to be hoped that, its outward symbolism notwithstanding, the various ceremonies enacted in the Holy City produce a thoughtful and devotional atmosphere in the minds of those who have the good fortune to see them, as they certainly did in mine.

The different religious services, the passing and repassing of many processions, the trekking of the Bedouins, the Maronites and even of the Russian pilgrims to that Cradle of Christianity during Easter, give to it a colour and grandeur of other days—of times that make you think beyond the crowds of sweet-vendors, the sellers of cool drinks and others who swarm the courtyard of the church. There are many items of interest to see during that period in Jerusalem, and preparing myself for the round of most of them, I rose early on Palm Sunday. By seven I was in the Church of Holy Sepulchre. It was so full that literally I had to elbow my way through the worshippers. They were awaiting the Latin Patriarch, the Copts had already started their chant, swaying from side to side after the Arab manner, their headgear moving with every gesture, their faces showing devotion such as you can see writ large only on the countenances of the people of the tropics.

Presently the crowd gave way; a procession was approaching. The Patriarch, clad in his robes of honour, followed by deacons and assistants dressed in gold and purple, went to the entrance of the Tomb, where the blessing of the palm started immediately. One by one the clergy advancing received their palms, some kissing his hands, others kneeling with reverence and emotion rarely seen in the hurried life of the West to-day. An Arab led his aged mother ; the woman blinded with age held her grand-

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daughter in her lap to receive her blessings, and how she clung to the palm !

Another never-to-be-forgotten scene was the ceremony of the " Washing of the Feet." Outside the Church of Holy Sepulchre, the courtyard was full to its utmost capacity. I dropped my fountain pen, and could not stoop to pick it up, the crush was so great. Not only was that space packed out to the last inch, but also the roofs of the adjoining houses, every little nook and corner ledge, even a foot-wide shed over the windows was one great sea of human faces. It was a hot day to boot, but few seemed to mind it.

A little before eight, there was a movement in the crowd —a movement such as you see when a gentle breeze wafting across a field sways the barley corn, and we knew that the great bells would soon be tolling on the appearance of the procession of the Greek Orthodox Church. Presently a delightful peal of bells from the Greek convent announced the arrival of the Patriarch. The acolytes dressed in glorious robes of gold and purple entered the courtyard first, followed by the clergy in long black gowns of their order, after them walked in measured steps the " Twelve Apostles," the gold of their crimson robes dazzling the eye, and last of all came the Greek Patriarch. Oh, what a picture he made, resplendent as that dignified old gentleman was in his red costume emblazoned with gold and wearing a crown of golden filigree sparkling with jewels !

The crowd welcomed them vociferously, even drowning the voice of a " reader " who in a sing-song voice intoned a Mass from the balcony of the Church. The procession moved on slowly, ever so slowly, and then halted for the briefest time. One by one the " Apostles " mounted the platform in the centre of the courtyard, and sat alongside

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the Throne. The Patriarch then ascended and occupied the Throne, thus setting the stage for a great mystic drama of religion.

Amongst a gathering of men and women of all climes and colour, the old Patriarch awaited " to wash the feet of his Apostles." The scene is like a passion play; religious intensity again and again produces tense moments, the story of the Last Supper is being chanted by one from the balcony of the Church, on men's faces spirituality plays and blends with the wonderment of it all. The women of the town and the desert hide their faces with emotion for now the passage is being read :

> " He riseth from supper and laid aside His garments : and took a towel and girded Himself. After that He poured water into the basin and began to wash His disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded."

At this the Patriarch rose from his throne and one by one the twelve dignitaries of his church were the subjects of his attention.

An acolyte carrying water in a silver basin accompanied the Patriarch who knelt before each " Apostle," and washed the right foot of every one of them, including the protesting but ultimately submitting " Peter." In a century when men are little better than machine-fodder, it really does good to see such scenes of an older world. It transported me to an age to which eyes and ears could scarcely give credence, for the inner meanings of this simple story plunged me into thought during the whole day to the extent that I forgot to note that the ceremony terminates at the Greek convent after the procession has moved to Gethsemane. And, " Would you have toasted muffins for tea, sir ? " whispered respectfully to me by the grandly dressed head waiter of my European hotel in Jerusalem startled me.

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Oh, what a jolt from the day-dreams of the era of Jesus to the somewhat meaningless life of our own day !

An equally significant ceremony of the time is the celebration of the appearance of the Holy Fire from the Tomb in the Church of Holy Sepulchre. Thousands journey from distant lands to be present on the occasion, and light their candles from the " light which is miracle." For the morning arrivals the doors are opened at eight. Confident in my early rising habits, I arrived a little before the hour, but found that not only was the courtyard full of people waiting to get into the church, but hundreds had slept in the church to be in time for the morning's ceremony. When the doors were ultimately opened, masses of humanity poured into the interior. For some little while I walked about seeing the various objects of uncommon interest. As a church it is not beautiful ; but the masonry did not interest me as such ; stone and clay were a mere nothing. There was something beyond, something arresting the heart with its spiritualism. Men sat on mats, candles were being sold to the faithful to light with the Holy Fire, rosaries, even holy relics were bought by the dozen. Arabs spoke and chanted with Frenchmen, feeling no colour bar, an American was engaged in earnest conversation with the blackest of Abyssinians ; and that aspect set you a-thinking whether prejudice against the coloured races is not, after all, untrue to the real spirit of Christianity.

At every minute of the hour the number of the incomers increased, till at ten, the dignitaries of the church began to arrive. The Coptic procession headed by Kvas, who thumped their maces, ushered the Bishop. Surrounded by his flock, they stood all the time. The people of the Armenian church followed soon after, and encircled the

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Holy Sepulchre before taking their stand. Presently the crowd became more enlivened by the arrival of men who carried bundles of thin wax tapers. They held one of their fellows aloft on their shoulders, singing loudly, and the chorus was taken up by the huge mass of humanity gathered within and outside the Church ; they began with :

" O St. George,
We have come to pray at the sepulchre !
We, we are the Christians,
With candles in our hands ! "

Such and other scenes mingled till noon, when the pealing of the giant bells proclaimed the approaching procession of the Patriarch. The deacon carrying a great cross followed the Kvas, who led the way in. Then boys dressed in white and violet entered singing and chanting, also a host of priests and Bishops. In his glorious robe of white satin and gold, and wearing a golden crown the Patriarch strode in his dignity. Thrice the procession went round the Tomb, after which the choir and the priests melted into the crowd. The deacon takes up his place at the circular hole through which Holy Fire is to light his bunch of candles. Stillness prevails. The Patriarch, removing his crown and fine raiment, enters the Holy of Holies, his Bishops stand outside close to the door. In a minute, the deacon shouts that he has got the Holy Fire. Amidst a wild frenzy of religious excitement, the people rush with their candles to light them at those of the deacon's, whilst the Patriarch himself is allowing people to take the Fire from his flaming torch. In less time than it takes to write, practically every one of the huge mass has his Holy Fire in the shape of a lighted candle or a taper. Soon it reaches those who wait in the courtyard, and before long in every house in Jerusalem the Holy Fire

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is burning ; also the more devout are seen hurrying to motor-cars to take the lighted candles to Jaffa, from where it is known that the Holy Fire is conveyed by ships to such distant places as Egypt, Turkey and Italy.

And, indeed, it matters not to me how, in this enlightened age, the masses still believe that the Holy Fire comes out of a hole in the Tomb and lights the torch of the Patriarch. I am not of the crowds, but rather a student who sees the profundity of such practices and the spirit in which they are performed. Yes, indeed, the Holy Fire in Jerusalem opens your mind's eye if you have the wisdom to see more than lies on the surface.

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CHAPTER VI

TO THE HOLY HOUSE OF ALLAH AND BEYOND

THE day came when I bade farewell to Jerusalem, and crossing the river Jordan entered the youngest Arab Kingdom of Transjordinia beyond the Dead Sea. Here a son of the ex-King Husian rules his nomads from his capital of Aman. Little does one see there, although the princely hospitality of Amir Abdullah very largely compensates for the dreariness of Transjordinia.

But journeying southwards to the wondrous ruins of the Lost City of the Desert, called Petra, one's imagination is thrilled by the sight of it all. It is known to be the seat of a great Nabataean civilization, and beyond the fact that these people guarded the highways of caravans passing from Asia to the provinces of the Nile little of its authentic story is known.

Carved on the sheer face of living terra-cotta rocks, the ruins of this mysterious city have slumbered for centuries in the heart of the desert ; and wild Arabs guard its approaches with a jealousy hardly equalled anywhere in the world, for they believe that gold is buried amongst its many tombs. To penetrate its remarkable secrets constitutes a singular triumph of exploration, for you flirt with death when you trek through parched deserts to the red-rose city of Petra—the oldest rock-hewn town known to the world's history.

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Clad in Arab garb, long robes flapping in the desert air, between towering cliffs—with a clear drop of hundreds of feet—worn smooth with age, the noise of your tread echoes and re-echoes through the narrow labyrinthine gorge like the weird whispering drifting from the valley of the priest's tomb, or a deep moan from the altar of sacrifice up above.

Then standing before the Hall of Justice in the mysterious silence of that dumb rock city, you could almost visualize the long lines of camels of a distant age, laden with the merchandise of the East, making their way to the far-off land of the Pharaohs, and feel as if transported to a life of two thousand years ago ; you are lost to the world whilst you gaze upon it all.

Life of Meditation in the Veiled Mecca.

A hundred thousand or more Muslim pilgrims crowd in the desert city of Mecca for their annual pilgrimage. By far the largest number of them dwell under the British flag ; yet they come from every part of the globe in quest of that Grail of a Muslim's heart. They travel singly, or with their families, in motor cars, on camels or merely trudge the sun-baked regions of Arabia. The city is open only to Muslims, and my recent visit to the mystic shrines of that veiled town of the desert has left very vivid impressions upon my mind as I took to the Pilgrim's Way to Mecca, which lies some fifty miles east of the Red Sea port of Jeddah, where the pilgrims leave their boats to journey on camels or how they will to the City of Prayer in the heart of the desert.

From Jeddah, our long caravan journeyed Mecca-ward. With my head shaven and wearing only one white sheet, the pilgrim's costume, I nestled down in my mat-covered

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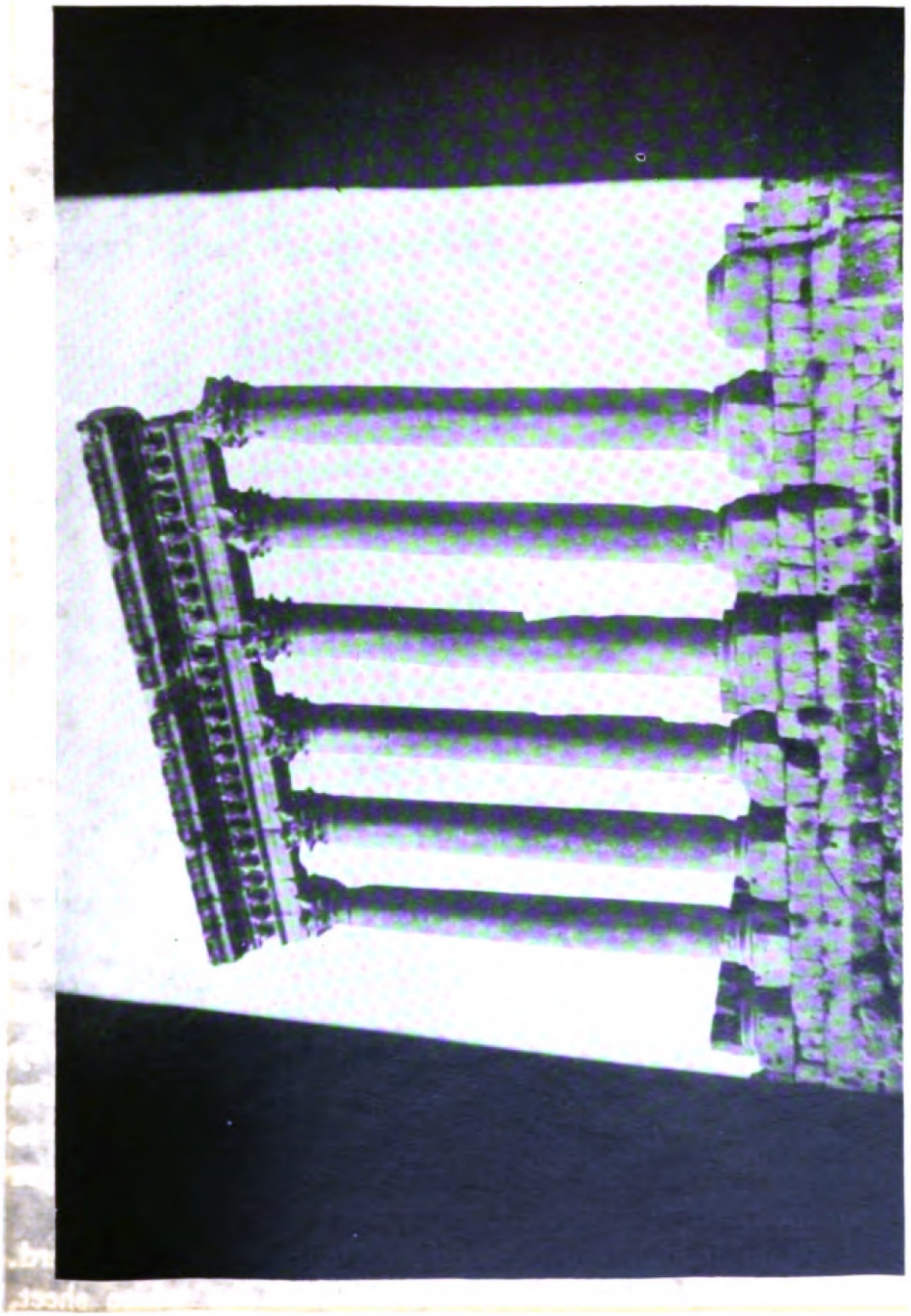

SIX REMAINING COLUMNS OF THE TEMPLE OF THE SUN AT BAALBAK, IN SYRIA

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litter which was tied on the back of my camel. The rocking movement to and fro of my litter kept time with the recitation of ninety-nine names of Allah. " I am in Thy Presence, O, the Mighty," I prayed and my tongue seemed to cling to the roof of my mouth with thirst, but imbued with an intense feeling of religious fervour, I continued, " Lead me in Thine own way, O Allah, as I approach Thy Throne." And the ship of the desert moved on with his fellows, munching all the time, quite oblivious of the scorching heat that beat upon the brown rocks, painting everything now violet, now red, now grey.

An indescribable feeling came upon me on seeing the two whitewashed pillars which stand some three miles outside the city of Mecca, to mark the inviolable sanctuary of Islam, within which no blood may be shed ; and all of a sudden in the lap of encircling brown-grey hills appeared Mecca.

Its buildings stand in the midst of a distant violet haze, and a huge cry of prayer from the thousands of the faithful rose to the skies. Then we plunged into silence, a silence of reverence ; some prostrating, others kneeling and lifting our tear-dimmed eyes to the city towards which we had prayed five times a day all our lives, as our ancestors had done for over a thousand years of Islamic history.

Wearing the regulation costume, I waited in the sullen heat while the sun beat down on my shaven head, till I found room to approach the holy precincts. Thousands of pilgrims packed the Harem Sharief, or the Great Mosque, waiting to kiss the mystic Black Stone which, set in silver, is built in a wall of a small room covered by the Carpet. Around this structure wide marble floor is laid, on which the faithful walk as they encircle the Kaba seven times on entering the Mosque.

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In the midst of this vast quadrangle of some 280 paces long and eighty paces broad, surrounded as it is by the double arches of the colonnades, stood Kaba, where the bending and swaying of the worshippers, the loud recitations of the Egyptians as they faced the heart of the Mosque, or clung to the curtains of the mystic Kaba, appeared to me a world of its own.

For ten days or so our world-congregation was engaged in prayer in Mecca. From early morning till late at night there was nothing but one round of prayer and meditation. There is no lighter side to life in Mecca. From the point of view of strict Islamic injunction there should be nothing but that spirit in the city, because this exclusiveness of the atmosphere is considered to bring out the real essence of the faith, the more so to its followers in contrast to their life prior to taking the pilgrimage.

We stayed in pilgrim rest-houses which, towering to six or seven storeys, are built on the slopes of the hills. They are let by the Meccaians in apartments during the season of the pilgrimage. Their rents vary from three pounds to ten times as much, according to the nearness to the Shrines. All food is imported from the Red Sea ports to Mecca, as none can be grown in that part of the desert. Everyone cooks his own food and buys his own rations of water. This latter item is of great importance, because there is only one sweet-water well in the whole city, and when the difficulty of satisfying the need of over fifty thousand pilgrims is taken into account it is not surprising that sometimes one pays as much as a shilling for a small bucketful of water. Its price might even increase with fresh arrivals of pilgrims, for Mecca is known to have housed as many as a hundred thousand pilgrims at one time. It is, even, not uncommon to import water from

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Jeddah, especially when the day temperature in the shade rises to 133 degrees and more. Generally speaking there are no arrangements for cooling the houses either by electric fans or other methods used in the tropics. Ice is sold out before the sacking is removed from it, so to speak, for probably it is the rarest commodity.

Only in the evenings, when the heat of the sun abates a little, yet leaving the rocks still warm with the day's heat, could we walk in the many covered bazaars, and examine those wonderful silks and beads that are made in and around Mecca ; or climb up the adjoining hills, particularly when the moon rises, to see Mecca lying in the hollow as a fairyland of silver, solemn, still, mysterious ; glowing with no electric lights, but tallow candles paling away in the distance. The scene robs one of the fatigue of the stiff climb. Later we ride, not in motor cars, for none is allowed in the Holy City, but on gaily painted donkeys, their tiny bells suspended on their hairy necks and jingling all the way to our respective rest-houses.

The most remarkable spectacle which met my eyes there was, when thirty thousand Wahabis of the desert, mounted on their camels, in the full blaze of the heat, were at prayer with us near Mecca. Their warrior king, Sultan Ibn Saud, dressed in the humblest garb of the pilgrims, stood in front, leading the prayer. It was three in the afternoon, according to the Western method of time calculation, when the intensity of the rays of the sun was at its greatest. The heat waves passed in and out of the ranks of the Wahabi soldiers, their faces stern and immovable, as if steel-graven, lifted to the wall of the mighty rocks enshrining the memories of early Islam, as they heard the deep intonations of their leader's prayer. He was reading aloud : " Meekly do we approach Thee, O The Mightiest of the mighty.

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Lead us to the path trodden by the faithful and the accepted ones." He prayed loud and long, and then stopped, as if choked and overcome with religious emotion. The terrific rays of the naked desert sun poured down upon him, and over it all sat a great silence. But he was reading again, " Give us strength, O Allah," he began, " to march in Thy way so that we might be of some service to Islam." Thirty thousand voices of the Wahabis mingled in one mighty " Amen," and rumbled and echoed through the hills beyond into the parched sands of the desert. Then they sank into mute prayer again for three hours at a stretch, till the Call of the evening prayer dispersed them, and Ibn Saud, that warrior ruler of Arabia, that enigma of the desert, took his place in the humblest ranks of the faithful.

Then in the gloaming, which quickly was swallowed up by the darkness of the desert, our caravan moved to the shore. Men and women, all we pilgrims appeared to be dazed ; we seemed to drop suddenly into a vacuum completely cut off from all life of moving humanity. A joy filled our hearts for having performed the holiest action of Islamic religion. New feelings thrilled our minds, and as the moon rose and hung like a scimitar over the crest of the rocky defiles, a thin streak on the pale face of the limitless sands was our pilgrim caravan, as that moving thread of life trekked in and out of the desert hills to the shores of the Red Sea at the close of our pilgrimage.

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CHAPTER VII

THE DESERT RAIDERS AND ARABIAN IDYLL

I DID not understand the true significance of the desert saying that " before the Most Accepted One of Allah there is much hardship," till I had reached the sand dunes up the way to the east of the Arabian Peninsula. Mine was not a mission of exploration. It was wandering, and a wanderer has no compass, so accepting the philosophy of Stevenson I pinned my faith to his dictum that to be moving is better than arriving.

Trekking up and down aimlessly as I was I fell into the hands of bandits about whom much has been heard lately in the British mandatory regions of Iraq. The only way to get out of their clutches was to play the brigand and then, watching the opportunity, make good one's escape. Three ruffians stood before me with loaded rifles. " I shall shed no blood if I become one of you," I said ; and after that there was nothing for it but to savvy, and I fell into line.

I must explain that the Government of Iraq at that time had about as much authority in its south-western outposts as the London Police have in the Scilly Isles. Caravans for Basra and Mecca are constantly passing across the tract to and from the Holy City. Those which pay tribute are immune. If they don't—well, sand doesn't leave many traces, even of green turbans. It has been said that the

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desert Arabs don't abuse fellow Muslims—about as much as Rob Roy didn't abuse fellow Christians, I fancy.

About a couple of days after I had unwillingly joined up, a rumour came to the camp that a caravan from Koweit was crossing the desert to Medina, and that it would come by that part of the frontier where we were situated before striking south for the sacred places. Naturally the news aroused the wildest enthusiasm among the eighty odd blackguards who composed our band. Life in the camp had been somnolent enough before, a matter of occasional scouting, interspersed with coffee-drinking and smoking. Now vedettes were sent out all over the horizon and an extraordinary feverish activity prevailed. Even so, it was another three days before we got reliable news of the whereabouts of the caravan and this necessitated a camel ride of more than thirty miles.

It was at evening that we at last got our first sight of it, a thin, black streak on the pale face of the desert, a moving thread of life among the sandhills. Down we swooped with a wild whooping calculated to scare an impi of Zulus, and I cannot help laughing as I remember that in my nervousness of the ugly chieftain I gave vent to some of the most bloodcurdling yells ever heard out of transpontine drama. If the "Talkies" ever want anyone to shriek "off" in a peculiarly ghastly manner, I offer my services as boss invisible ghoul at a quite reasonable figure.

The caravan came to a dead halt, and the ends drew back on the centre. Not a shot was fired, for the payment of tribute was the usual custom. Shortly we came up with our victims, who were obviously demoralized. The leader of the train rode out and explained to us that it was composed of exceptionally poor pilgrims who were unable to pay anything in the way of blackmail. In the

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name of the holy priest would the chief not allow them to pass ?

But the chief had heard that story before. " We shall investigate their poverty," he said sternly, and then the fun began. Fat Hadjis and portly merchants were manhandled and forced to part with their personal jewellery, money, and other belongings. Bales of costly merchandise were unwrapped and hypothecated. Camels of pedigree and valuable dromedaries were impounded. Fine Arab horses were selected. And those who complained or resisted were badly beaten up and mauled. Cries of fear and indignation, curses and maledictions resounded on all sides.

I felt the chief's eye on the man standing next to me. He strode up to a little wizened fellow who was making more uproar than half a dozen others. The Chief presented a rifle at his head.

" Pay up," he yelled, " or by the holy priest, I shall make you a leaden present."

" Brother," he shrieked, " I have nothing, nothing, but the holy faith I take to the shrines, let the angels hear me."

" Off with your turban," he said menacingly, " or the devils will hear you quick."

Weeping and protesting, he drew off his greasy headgear. Within was a handful of choice turquoises from Persia. On these the brigand chief swooped like a hawk, giving him a look of commendation.

It was a sorry train that we left in the desert as we rode backwards. But now came my opportunity. That night as the raiders sat in the moonlight dividing their loot, and much too busy at the job to think of anything else, I quietly mounted my camel and made off. By morning I was well on my way to Koweit.

The day was hot and oppressive, but I was making record

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speed on my ship of the desert, till the fierce rays of the sun began to show mercy and it was evening ; one of those nights fell that you see only in the vast stretches of sand dunes when all is quiet and the sky is jagged by dazzling points of light. And I slept the sleep of the weary.

I had been asleep only a short while when I awoke to find the business end of a long rifle rammed so hard in my neck as to be near breaking the skin. Struggling into a sitting posture I saw a lean dark face peering through the opening of my black tent covering.

" Hullo ! " I said, " what about it ! Take that shooting-iron away from my jugular, will you ? "

" Peace be on you," said my visitor, " I thought for a moment that you were an infidel."

" There is another think coming to you," I told him, " what's it all about ? "

" Truly you are a man of strange words," replied my acquaintance, " do you not know in our country sleeping men are apt to be rudely awakened ? "

I assured him that I had gathered the idea previously, but had resolved to ignore it. And as the trusting son of the desert laughed consumedly, I raised my foot and kicked him so hard on the knock-out part of the chin that he immediately dreamed of the planets. As nearly painless as might be, I roped him up, and knowing that some of his crowd would be along soon, took his camel and left him mine. His was a fleet one of the desert, one of the best, as I saw at a glance. The camel is, however, a froward beast. He will obey his master grudgingly, and being lawless at heart is only too prone to rebel against others. Before I had well mounted him, this demon of the desert made off like a tempest towards the place of sunrise, bumping me at every stride till I felt like the makings of an omelet.

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THE DOME OF THE ROCK IN JERUSALEM

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Great Scot! but how that fleet brute careered over the burning desert. And then, just like a Margate donkey, he stopped dead, and I went over his long neck, ploughing my way down, down through a seeming ocean of hot sand.

When I came to the surface again, blaspheming in an argosy of six languages, and shaking the burning particles out of my eyes, ears and hair, I was amazed to hear a woman's voice greeting me. Now women unsponsored in the desert are about as rare as swallows in December, and I gazed through my watering eyes in amazement, until I saw by her dress and lack of veil that she was what is known as one of the "Free Women" of Arabia—a caste of ladies who for some reason or other have always been regarded with special reverence by the Bedouins, and who are not subjected to their rather wearing social laws.

"And what can I do to help you?" I asked rather weakly.

"Your heri has gone," she replied smilingly, "and unless I give you a lift on mine you will have to remain here, so far as I can see."

"Very kind of you," I replied. "Come, let us be moving, for there are certain people in this vicinity who are looking for my heart's best blood, and I haven't a drop to spare at the moment."

"I will take you on one condition," she said very firmly, "and it is that you take me to be your wife."

"But I thought a Free Woman never married!"

"That's just it!" she remarked pettishly, "and I am tired of the single state."

Now I didn't want to splice up with the lady, and I knew it would be suicide to tell her I had a wife at home, so I merely nodded gravely. She made her camel kneel, I mounted behind, and off we went.

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"Where do we go from here, Bulbul?" I asked.

"We go to Koweit," she replied, "I want to see the Pictures, for the Inglis have brought the Magic Show, also my name is not Bulbul, but Khawala, so please remember."

The Pictures! A traitorous thought leaped into my mind. Five hours of clop-clopping through the sand to Koweit on the Gulf! It must be the Pictures at once, hungry and thirsty as I was. Night had fallen as we entered the movie house, and the interior was as dark as the cave of Eblis. So far, so good!

The film on the screen was one of those sob-stuff torments which turn most women into perfectly good understudies of Niobe for about six reels or so. My prophetic hopes, I found, were correct. Khawala was no exception to the rule. At the first sad caption she began to sniff, and when the Italian heroine writhed on a marble seat on reading the telegram that told of her lover's accident, she reached for my hand. Eventually when the said lover returned on crutches, she broke down entirely, and laid her head on my shoulder.

"You are overcome," I whispered. "Let me get you some coffee, a cup will just put you right." A cup of coffee to an Arab woman is what a cup of tea is to her European sister, a never-failing solace.

Khawala peered up at me through the gloom.

"You are so good, dear," she murmured. "Yes, I think I should like a cup, but you won't be long, will you?"

Assuring her that I would not, I crept from the picture house and made for the docks at greyhound speed. A felucca was in the act of weighing out for the port of Basra. The lateen sails were going up, and the anchor was on deck.

"Hi! Hi!" I called to the skipper. "Take me with

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you and I'll split a gold piece with you when we get to Basra."

"Jump then!" he cried back, "and save your neck if you can, for I can't put back."

I closed my eyes and jumped. A broken neck seemed a mild way out compared with what waited for me in the picture-house yonder.

For I should have told you that Khawala was forty-five if she was a day, that she had but three teeth in the upper jaw, and a smile like that on the face of a tiger.

Pressed by circumstances, I may go "Back to Alabama" as a popular song writer assures us its hero declares he will do. But come weal, come woe, I shall not return to those wild regions of old Asia. There are other and less exciting ways of facing the Angel Azrael.

Once in Baghdad one sees really little of the grandeur of the early Khilafas of Islam. But what I did notice was that the King of Iraq had made his kingdom a reality by his own personal skill. There are roads where for centuries no road existed, modern means of transport, agricultural and other improvements, which cannot but prove the fact that the great experiment to make "roses bloom in the wilderness" has really succeeded in Iraq.

In the capital city of King Feisal I was greatly interested in the sect of the Star Worshippers or Saabeens as they are called by the Arabs.

When you turn round the corner from New Street in Baghdad to cross the river by the boat bridge there, a distant thud-thudding of small hammers strikes upon your ears. It is not mere curiosity that takes you to the lane of the silversmiths of Old Baghdad, for there the air is somehow fresher and the comparative calmness of that

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bazaar seems to lure you on till you stand before an Arab's shop where big and small silver wares are arrayed before you.

In the open and doorless shop there are no well-polished counters from which to serve a customer, nor is the place full of modern shop fittings. Instead, on low tables of crudely cut date-palm wood tiny silver vases, cigarette cases, trinket boxes, even silver bells for children, are exhibited for sale. Behind it are a score of things. First of all a pair of hand bellows, an earthen vessel of water, literally hundreds of curiously shaped tools with which the Arab craftsman is working, hammering and beating into shape flat pieces of silver. His son or younger brother, maybe, sits beside him, either mixing lead and antimony or some other slate-coloured stuff to be filled in the carving which the old Arab is executing so delicately on the silver pieces.

There are no more than four or five shops of this description in the whole of Baghdad, there are two in Basra, and a few in Mosal. The work which is turned out is highly prized in four continents both on account of the fact that these craftsmen are never known to overcharge and that their work has not been excelled even by the best of modern goldsmiths. Racially these men are Arabs, and by faith Star Worshippers. They call themselves Saabeens, and in outward appearance cannot be distinguished from the average Iraqian Arabs.

They are a curious people, and it is only since the Great War that the existence of their strange beliefs has become known. They are remarkable too for the fact that although they hold the customs, and even to a certain degree the general beliefs of the neighbouring Arab race, yet they remain aloof and socially isolated from them.

Known to some as the Star Worshippers of Mesopotamia, they are the descendants of the Saabeens mentioned in the

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Book of Job, though not of those spoken of in the Koran according to the later Doctors of Islamic Theology. Withal during the Turkish supremacy over Iraq, their appellation as the people mentioned in the Muslim Holy Book was admitted, and they along with the Jews and the Christians were regarded as the " people of the Book."

There are those who would deny them the label of " St. John Christians," on the ground that the " John " whom they profess to follow most certainly is not the Christian saint, and in no sense of the word can they be looked upon as Christian, their religion being a curious compound of ancient Babylonian astro-theology, Judaism, Christian and Muslim observances and rites. Their sacrifices and rules governing purification are obviously of Jewish origin, the similarity of Levitical ordinances being too strongly marked to admit of doubt. From Christian practice has been borrowed the observance of the first day of the week, baptism, the Lord's Supper and the reverence of John the Baptist. From the Muslim religion has come the sanction for and practice of polygamy.

The doctrines of this strange people in a somewhat fragmentary form are contained in the Sidre Rabba (their great religious book), which gives evidence of a great variety of authors and reveals a large number of contradictions. Many efforts have been made to secure a copy but few have been successful, for so jealously are existing copies guarded that it is difficult to obtain even a glimpse of them. Several years ago some travellers succeeded in securing a copy but representations were promptly made to the Consul and the book was returned to its rightful owners.

A curious feature of the book is that half of each page is reversed in order that, when placed over a narrow channel

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of running water, it may be read by priests sitting on either side.

Among other of their sacred books are " The Book of Souls," a " Liturgy for the Priests," and volumes containing marriage ceremonial ; the " Life of John the Baptist," a treatise on Astrology and various formulæ for incantation and sorcery. The " Book of Souls," contains a history of the death of Adam, who is reverenced by them as one of their greatest Prophets, but by far the larger part consists of prayers for the living and the dead.

It is interesting to note that according to Saabeen belief the world had its origin in a " First Fruit "—analogous to the Orphean theory of the world egg, from which it is believed the Great Lord brought forth life. From this life emanated yet another life who was Jesus Christ, but upon his endeavouring to usurp the power belonging to the Great Lord he was placed among the planets and there remains as Mercury. The Saabeens contend that the Heavens consist of exceedingly pure solid water, so hard that not even a diamond can cut it and in it flows the earth and all heavenly bodies. They hold, too, that the earth is surrounded on three sides by sea and that on the fourth there is a mountain of turquoise, the reflection from which gives the sky its blueness.

In Saabeen astronomy the Pole Star is situated in the very centre of the dome of Heaven, to which star they direct their prayers, hence the name " Star Worshippers " by which they are known.

An interesting belief held by the Saabeens is that the Queen of Darkness married Fire and gave birth to twenty-four sons, of whom seven were the planets (including the sun), twelve were the Signs of the Zodiac, the remainder being unknown.

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Contiguousness to running water is necessitated by the tenets of the Saabeen's creed, for in addition to the practice of reading the Sidre Rabba over running water, baptism is received by the pious every Sunday, and through their tiny places of worship, which are only large enough to accommodate two or three priests, run small streams, over which prayers are said. In these churches there is no furniture whatever, the only convenience being a shelf upon which books and other articles are kept.

The Priesthood is open to women as well as men. The first grade in the Ministry is that of novitiate, following which is the Priest ; the next step is that of Bishop, the highest official being the Chief Priest. It is a condition that no Priest may have the slightest blemish upon his body; consequently the Chief Priest presents an exceedingly attractive appearance. The Priesthood may be attained by a woman, but only on condition of marrying a male priest. No Saabeen woman is allowed to wear anything blue and it is also contrary to their religion for anyone professing it to wear dark clothing.

In population they have sadly diminished, for while in the seventeenth century they numbered about 20,000 families, to-day their total strength does not exceed 3,000 souls, the majority of which dwell around Sug-al-Shuyakh. Very few live in Baghdad and none outside the borders of Mesopotamia. This great decrease is due mainly to internal strife ; intermarriage of their women with Mahommedans in recent years being a further contributory cause

The chief occupations of the Saabeens are those of canoe-building and silversmiths. They are also very successful in dairy-farming. Their exquisite workmanship in metal is justly famous—silver and a black metal being wrought together in cunning and effective designs. The

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composition of this black metal—which is supposed to contain antimony—is kept a close secret by the trade. Their natural and exceptional abilities as smiths and also builders of the peculiar canoe called the *mashhuf* have caused the Arabs to exhibit greater tolerance towards them, for in neither of these occupations has the Arab any skill.

The Saabeens, male and female, are strikingly handsome, having luxurious hair which they never cut, and which enables them to be easily recognized as "Star Worshippers."

During the Great War they were pressed into the Army by the Turks, but had to be excused from military service owing to their religious beliefs—for instance, the rule necessitating that they live always near to running water.

The correct ethnographical name of the Saabeens is "Mandeans," a word which in their language means "Disciples of St. John." Their language, which belongs to the Semitic group, is a first cousin of the Syriac: they possess no printed literature, but a few manuscripts are in the hands of European scholars. The chief Mandaitic scholar was Petermann, a German Orientalist, who about sixty years ago spent two years at Sug-al-Shuyakh.

The modern Iraq being an epitome of Arab effort in which King Feisal has played a great part, I cannot do better than compare his mind and methods with those of his kinsmen in the region of Nejd and the Hijaz, especially in relation to the endeavours at reconciliation amongst these rival Arab kings in which Sultan Ibn Saud has a very significant role to play towards a united Arabia.

Curious to relate, from the fringes of an apparently inert and "unliving" region in Arabia, a movement has arisen which might change the face of the world: for the

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AN ARAB PROCESSION IN JERUSALEM, ON ITS WAY TO NABI MUSA CELEBRATIONS

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two rivals, namely, the Sultan Ibn Saud, who rules those warlike Arabs, and King Feisal of Iraq, " have kissed each other's cheeks in friendship true," as the Arab saying goes.

Of the two above-mentioned monarchs, perhaps Sultan Ibn Saud, the Wahabi King, and now the Guardian of the Holy Shrines of Mecca, is the greater enigma of the desert. At a complimentary meeting with this Sultan, I watched the march past of his Calvinistic followers from the lattice window. Horse hoofs hit hard against the stones of the narrow lanes leading to the public square. A hundred or more horsemen, on their prancing mounts, flashed their swords in the noonday sun, slashing the air with their scimitars ; another cavalcade and yet another was followed by the Camel Corps, all armed to the teeth. " Samin, Lamin—hearing and gleaming we ride," they shouted, as steely light shone like glittering beads in their eyes. Small pieces of spotted cloths tied upon their mouths and noses reminded you that tobacco smoke, which is banned to them, as are alcoholic drinks, shall not be allowed to penetrate their nostrils.

" It does not behove a guest to say much," I spoke, bending over to where the Sultan's son was sitting, " but is there a war on here ? " My whisper was overheard, as I found Ibn Saud himself beaming upon me. " Ya ! Syedi," he said in that inimitable tone of his when smile blends with a curious sincere timbre in his voice. " There is war always in the offing, you must at all times be ready for it. This is the surest way of maintaining peace in the desert. What you have seen is but an instrument of peace." His eyes all the while swept the circle of his courtiers for a sign of what his remark meant to them. They nodded in approval.

Later on, during my stay in Arabia, on a sultry

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forenoon as we rode beyond, the Sultan's brow was distinctly anxious. He sat on his camel with the dignity of a monarch. Ten thousand Nejdi warriors were at the moment in his train, and he was entering the highest sanctuary of Islam as its protector—the greatest honour that exists for a Muslim King—and yet Ibn Saud felt uneasy.

"Ya, Moulana. Oh! you, the learned man!" he addressed me, "it is that Ad Dawish that has gone the way they all go before they are killed!" Then I understood that a recalcitrant former vassal of his was causing him much anxiety that day.

Soon we halted at an oasis as the sun was getting unbearably hot. His followers lay about the adjoining boulder-strewn sandhills, the heat-lashed air playing upon their faces with no apparent effect. Like their royal master, they also set their coffee pots on twig and rag fires.

Then all of a sudden the Sultan rose to his feet. One of his eyes, which the doctors had given up as gone, was really not so bad at the time, I thought, for, from the little mound he sighted a lonely rider in the distance. Presently the king was peering through "the instrument that brings distance near." The small cloud of dust grew in size, till within a few minutes we could see that it was a lone camel rider.

"By the name of Allah!" murmured the great Wahabi, "Abdul Kasim brings fateful tidings!" He did. The refractory chieftain's men had killed no less than one hundred and eighty men of Nejd, had cut down palm trees and threatened to march to Riydh, the Wahabi capital.

Ibn Saud is not a man of passion, yet there was no mistaking it that colour was mounting his cheeks in rage. He told the ninety-nine names of Allah on his rosary in

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mute affection. You could feel that he was battling against his inner self. Then he spoke. "Walahay—by Allah. Call the scribes, now I have in my thoughts a plan." For over half an hour the two scribes sat on their haunches writing the Royal Order giving the minutest details to his Commander-in-Chief as to how the recalcitrant chieftain was to be dealt with : and then I appreciated to the full his remarks when we saw him review his troops that dangers always surrounded him.

Withal he is a real Arab, with the inherent love of the open spaces, where frequently he holds a sort of open-air court near Mecca. On my way to one of these I thought of what I had seen in Persia ; a long line of soldiers, gay uniforms, jinglings of decorations, trumpets ! But as I had ridden out three odd miles already to the Court, and nothing of grandeur was met, it began to puzzle me. Parched hills, limitless sand, stunted shrubs, a herdman here, a thin black streak of a camel caravan on the far edge of the desert and silence, was all that came my way.

In the lap of encircling hills, some five thousand men sat beside their camels in a military fashion of their own. In the middle, the Sultan reclined against his camel saddle. He sat on a goat-skin, and listened to the recitation of the life of the Prophet Mohamed. Without a word, I too, folded my feet under myself as I joined the Sultan's circle, and listened. I had forgotten the heat; instead, immense ideas of comparison rose in my mind. Here is a man, I thought, ruling over the largest Empire in Arabia, and yet so devoid of all "worldly trapping." When the recitation was over the Sultan must have been a reader of minds : "You must not be disappointed, Ya Moulana !" he addressed me, "at the colourlessness of it all. The colour is here, deep down under the skin and bone and

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flesh," as he delicately tapped over the left side of his chest. There was a grandeur of the desert mind in it.

My mind was exercised for a while regarding the age-long Arab political questions which might guide the formation of an Arab Federation. " In politics," he said, " we do not trust to ourselves. We take our reading from the Book—the Book of Allah, the Koran. If in it we find conformity of those political questions, those questions we undertake, otherwise they go. We wish peace with other Amirs, even with the sons of King Husain. The rest you would learn, Inshaallah ! as you live amongst us ! By and by ! you would see it." And he mused, as he struck the sands under him with his small stick several times. His Wahabi followers, with chins in the hollows of their right hands, and clutching the rifles in their left, sat listening admiringly to this magnetic force of the desert.

Later in the night, when guards had been posted, and camp fires had burnt themselves to dying embers, stealthily the flap of my tent was lifted, a face peered through, and in the half light of my tallow candle I recognized Prince Saud, the heir to the triple kingdom of Nejd, Hijaz and whatever lies in Central Arabia. It was then that I had the first-hand story of his father's efforts to subdue the Bedouins.

In the first instance, the Bedouins were conquered, subdued ; then they were enrolled in the movement of the Ikhwans, believing in the simplest and the most puritanic form of Islam, which is Wahabism ; and lastly agricultural colonies were started, where nomads might engage in agriculture. The land was provided by the King. These settled areas increased in size, thousands tired of precarious methods of living migrated to the agricultural colonies.

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A state grew, so did the power of the Ikhwans, over the destinies of which now presides Sultan Ibn Saud. But what is more surprising is the fact that he has done all this within less than a decade; no man of forty-eight years of age carved out a mighty empire for himself like Ibn Saud " out of nothing."

A complete contrast is afforded to the personality of Sultan Ibn Saud and Nejd by both King Feisal and the country of Iraq over which he rules. But the mind of this prince differs from the true wild Arab index which gives such a glow to his one-time rival Ibn Saud. It is the circumstances of world politics which have played a significant part in the moulding of the character of King Feisal, for he has always been, more or less, in the dazzling lights of Courts and has been hobnobbing with royalty ever since he was a boy.

I first met him in a European environment. At the time he was very much the protégé of the British Government. He talked with the cultured grace of the Arab nobility ; gentle, meek, and yet conscious of the dignity of his race. " You ask me about the future of Arabia," he said to me. I well recollect his words as they dropped so slowly from his lips, that I thought he was measuring every one of them. " Yes ! At the moment you might think it is in the melting pot. But we hold the keys of an Arab Empire ! " I thought even then that the hope was a little premature, for Ibn Saud was challenging his father, the ruler of Mecca. To say the least, his words attested to the inborn Arab traits of mind to stick to its property as a national heirloom even though their prestige was fast slipping from their hands. Feisal spoke then of many reforms which he would introduce in Arabia.

An intimate association with the moving life of Europe,

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stood Feisal in good stead, wherewith he started a programme of creating a kingdom in Iraq. This, I saw, manifested very clearly in Feisal's capital. There is a throb of activity at the place. Practically all the devices of reclaiming the land and its children from the ravages of sand and sun are working overtime in Iraq now. Roads are being laid, dams are being constructed, model farms laid, education is in progress, even representative government is supposed to function. There is nothing of modern advancement which you could not find in Baghdad and Basra to-day. But it is of a model which is not distinctly Arabian. Yet it is truly astonishing how within nine years a wreck of a province can justifiably claim its place amongst the self-governing states of the world. In character and spirit of the modern world, the desert kingdom is going ahead; without exaggeration due to the tremendous personal influence of King Feisal.

As you take a river motor launch to Karata-Maryam near the Maud Bridge over the Euphrates in Baghdad, you would notice the outer wall of a courtyard sharp upon the banks of the river. Inside it stands an unpretentious, double-storeyed house with many latticed windows. It is the place where lives the ex-King Ali, the elder brother of the King of Baghdad, and it is in the drawing room of this house that you would see King Feisal as his real self when he is visiting his exiled brother.

Through the windows of that house one could see the palm groves. "There, you see them?" pointed King Feisal to some Bedouin women and children picking their way to their far-off desert encampments, "these are the people for whom I work. All they need is education." In tone and enthusiasm, it occurred to me at the time, that pronouncement very truly indicated the mind of

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Feisal ; for he is a reformist after the modern style, a town-planner of totally different sort from Ibn Saud. His quiet tone and finish prove to you that the East and the West can be blended in just proportion in one person ; but that demands a personality. Feisal possesses it. Withal, the fire of the desert which I saw in the eyes of Ibn Saud, that vivacious alertness of a born soldier—ready at a moment's notice to jump on the back of a camel and lead the faithful to glory, you see and feel as you talk with Ibn Saud.

The atmosphere of the real Arab domain is the reverse of tameness. " The Holy Book and this," gruffly and passionately said the Wahabi King to me as he lifted his scimitar in the air and threw it on the sand to bury itself to the hilt, " is all I need. The Book guides us, and the sword carves the way to peace." And I thought of it as I sat in the drawing-room of King Ali, his brother, listening to the economic development of Basra port and planned his journey to the Persian frontier to see the conditions of the roads for himself. It was then four o'clock and a black slave brought, not the usual Arab coffee pot, but a tray of silver with delicious European cakes and China tea. King Feisal is well abreast of his age so far as modernity goes ; and then I could so clearly imagine the picture of another son of the sands, afar off, sitting mutely stroking his beard, and counting his beads as coffee was passed round, whilst heat waves bounded and floated over the grey-brown rocks of the Mecca hills ; and away on the distant edge of the desert the camel caravans dipped and rose amongst the sandy hills, and the Wahabi King sat drinking his coffee, till the cries of " Allaho—Akbar, Allaho—Akbar, God is Great, God is Great," rose from the lips of the priest calling the faithful to evening prayer.

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CHAPTER VIII

PERSIA'S ROMANTIC LIFE AND ADVENTURE

THE local colour of Arabia fades with each mile that you put in on the road to Western Persia from Baghdad. That is more perceptible to one travelling by motor for none can notice any change if the journey between Baghdad and Khanikin is made by the night train. From Baghdad going up you travel over a track mostly of hard sand till after some forty miles' driving you arrive at the Diala bridge at Baguba where both the road and the train cross it and where the particulars of the occupants of the car must be given to the police. From Baguba up to Khanikin winding through to Jabel Hamrin with its nasty turns and dried river beds the Iraq frontier port is reached ; but between this point and the Persian Custom House at Qasr Sherin, a distance of less than ten miles, you would be lucky to get through much before three hours. What with the appalling condition of the roads and the ultra-slowness of the Customs this is a most irksome port.

Generally speaking one stays the night at Qasr before taking to the road again and covering a distance of some 230 miles in fourteen hours to Kirmanshah. My driver was commissioned to deliver a new car at Tehran, and he drove like a very whirlwind, as he was in a hurry to get a hundred rupees as his wages at Tehran for bringing the car from Baghdad. At Kirmanshah practically the whole

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forenoon was lost in registering the new car and taking the Persian number after paying the dues there. In the meantime freezing wind chilled the marrow of any driver that tried to put his hands to the wheel. When at last I had coaxed the man to move, the severity of the cold had considerably lessened his desire to earn his wages—we got to Bistoon, rich in the early Persian history dating from the time of Darius, but just before a wayside Chia Khanay, or teashop, the driver pulled up the car.

When he was examining it, I observed that an anxious expression sat on his brow and he frequently stroked his left arm which had swollen with the exposure to the icy winds of the passes. Ultimately he declared that a vital part of the machine was broken and that we had better retrace our steps to Karmanshah. I objected to it, and the snow began to fall almost in lumps, yet we sped back to Karmanshah. There he told me that the real reason that he did not wish to go to Tehran and was willing to forgo his hundred rupees was because the Asadabad Pass was blocked by snow and I could stay as long as I liked at that forlorn Persian town till the road was clear, which might mean a week or a month, time did not matter.

Road or no I resolved to take the first vehicle to Hamadan, and after paying as much as ten pounds in place of six for seven hours' ordinary journey, covered the same 130 odd miles in five days ; and I can never forget the snow-clad mountains of the Asadabad Passes, where the water froze in the machine soon after it was poured into it. But yet horse carriages taking merchandise from Karmanshah to the markets of the interior were as busy as usual. Their beautifully clad Kurd drivers are a fine and fearless race of men who have an intense dislike of the motor drivers. Not infrequently very bad language is exchanged between

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the Baghdad motor driver and the Kurd ; and the sound of a motor horn brings the latter ready with his long whip to strike at the fleeting car in the hope that at least some portion of the whack might hit the driver. Far below yawns the Pass of Asadabad, where huge lorries, cars, horse carriages, even lumbering camels form an extraordinary procession against the snowy background. In the distance it looks like black beetles crawling over a corrugated sheet of white paper, and up above where you have to wind your way, Persian labourers are clearing the snow from the road, all for a shilling a day and a cup of tea ; but how merry they look with their putties and snow glasses pushed up on their dome-shaped hats as they stop their work to look at you ?

It is not always possible to do the remaining 240 miles of the distance between Hamadan and Tehran in a day, for even in summer twelve hours' hard driving on a fairly good road is tiring, but in the winter it is out of the question. In any case a halt at Kazvin from where a road goes up to Pahlavi on the Caspian Sea and another turns to the East towards the Persian capital, is definitely desirable.

Nowhere would you see the Russian influence more pronounced in Persia than at Kazvin for although the names of garages and hotel are printed both in English and Russian, I saw something of a novelty when Lenin's photograph was stuck in the hall of the hotel and the Russian tea was being served from a samovar made in Bokhara.

It is in this town, too, that Russian petrol from Baku has practically ousted both the English and the American oils from the market ; and big lorries of German and Russian make are being used as post vehicles. Their drivers are invariably Russians and their pay is very handsome indeed, because the Persians cannot yet manage

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to control the huge lorries, nor even the long distance cars from Baghdad ; consequently Sikhs of India and Arabs of Baghdad and Beyreuth in the West are to be found in the transport trade in East Persia. In Karmanshah, for instance, which is growing in importance as a centre of trade and a depôt for all merchandise that comes to Persia from the Iraq side. A British concern which has put heavy lorries on the road, I believe, is doing exceedingly well under its present manager, Mr. Bourne, and his very efficient assistant. Then a French group has been endeavouring to push the trade of Ford cars, even tractors being advertised. Here again I sound a despondent note that enough is not done by the English motor manufacturers in Persia —a country where there is no railway worth speaking about, and all transport for at least a decade must be entirely by road vehicles.

In the streets of Tehran you would see taxis, but much inferior in kind than in the Near East, and certainly more expensive to hire. The horse-tram is a feature of considerable interest in the Persian capital, whilst chars-a-banc ply between different parts of the city and its suburbs. But the horse carriages which are a replica of what you could see in Moscow, ply their trade very briskly. These compare very favourably with the Dorishka of Constantinople, except that when the snow sweeps the streets of Tehran, a carriage driver passes you, his horses in full gallop, to a richer man than yourself and shouts back to you his apologies, " May my life be sacrificed in the path of thy happiness, sire, but spare me this time," and a grandee of Persia jumps in the carriage and it rattles away while you get into a shop till the storm is over and splash through the slush with your goloshes on, and on reaching home drink the never-failing tea without milk, and watch with pitying

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eyes the poor Persian policeman standing under the metal umbrella endeavouring to control the traffic that does not obey him. In place of taking down the name of the car owner and the number of his licence, he approaches the offender : " My heart and soul, thy car and the cars of others might come to harm next time I see you driving so perilously ! " They both smile and it leaves no sting behind.

Apart from local scenes of the East, what impressed me most in Tehran was the tremendous effort being made to claim Persia's rightful place amongst the great nations of the world. No one who has seen the Persian capital under Riza Shah can doubt the great destiny of that country, chiefly because it is progressing on its own native lines.

Persia is undoubtedly one of those countries which, although they have the ability to give, do not take in return. Like Egypt and Spain, it must transmute everything that enters its borders. Its literature, its philosophy, are unique, and have set seal upon many other cultures. Nevertheless, the economic forces of the world cannot allow it to remain isolated. Its enormous potentialities must be exploited. Better transport is the crying need of this great country. It must find an outlet to the wide fields of Asia and Europe alike.

His Majesty Riza Shah Pahlavi by cutting the first sod on the site outside the town chosen for the Tehran railway station has answered the call of the Persian people for linking Central Asia with Arabia. This big scheme of railway development should revolutionize the economic possibilities of Persia and in no small measure affect the markets of the Near East. A railroad connecting the Caspian Sea with the Persian Gulf running through the

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most fertile regions of the land of the Shahs is a project which has long been the dream of all well-wishers of the Eastern people.

The economic tendencies of the Western world apart, the very fact that Iraq on one side and India on the other were pressing upon what once was self-sufficient Persia, meant that the latter country could no longer lag behind in tapping her own resources. The present regime under the guidance of Shah Pahlavi unquestionably responded to this want, till a definite step was taken to construct a railway line on the Eastern side of Persia beginning from Mohammarah on the Persian Gulf in the south to Bander-Guez near Pahlavi on the Caspian Sea in the north.

Now Mohammerah, situated as it is most advantageously on the eastern corner of the Persian Gulf, is an ideal starting point in the south. It is within a reasonable distance of the navigable rivers of Iraq and also close to Basrah which is attracting much of the Indian and Arabian trade as a gateway to the Near Eastern markets. The Anglo-Persian Oil Company has done not a little to lend importance to the port.

The railway route would begin then from Mohammerah proceeding northwards via Hamadan and Kasvin to Rasht and finally terminate at Bander-Guez on the Caspian Sea ; with a loop line connecting Hamadan to Tehran and joining up to the main line at Kasvin.

This route is the shortest—being about 500 miles long —if the loop line from Hamadan to Tehran is not calculated; but an alternating line is also being very seriously considered, which, with a southern terminus at Mohammarah on reaching Dizful would take a sharp bend to the right towards Ispahan and joining that town proceed northwards to Tehran and through Kasvin to the Caspian Sea. The

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great advantage of this route lies in the fact that the area of some 700 miles which it would cover would connect practically all the important commercial, agricultural and industrial regions of Eastern Persia with both the capital and the country and the seaports of the Caspian and the Persian Gulf.

The construction of the line presents great engineering difficulties. From Mohammarah there are not many obstacles, for a plain stretches to about 150 miles northwards, next a chain of rocky hills intersected frequently by rivers is met. In the case of the line working straight up from Dizful to Hamadan, this character of country continues till the carriage road is attained near Hamadan.

Generally speaking there is sufficient room between the actual river beds and the rocky defiles for the laying of a railway line. In its progress beyond Hamadan towards Kasvin the line would pass over Moran to Zendjan through the Hari-rud Valley before reaching the plains bordering the Kasvin area.

Both in the case of a loop line from Dizful to Ispahan-Tehran and the straight line up from Mohammarah, a very formidable pass of over 8000 feet has to be crossed, and once that is negotiated the remaining 130 miles to Ispahan are not difficult. Slightly rising plains are encountered between Tehran and Ispahan, nor are the rivers unmanageable. The country between Tehran and Kasvin of little over 100 miles is undoubtedly the easiest part of the route as it is practically level ground ; and indeed a railway in that area is the most pressing need for the domestic industries of Persia, as the coalfields of Ardahah, Chamburak and Khiv lie practically dormant.

The mining potentialities of Persia languish on account of absence of transport in the country. There are deposits,

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for instance, of alum, arsenic, orpiment, realgar, borax, cobalt, nickel, copper, gold, iron, lead, silver, gypsum. These are not worked in any sense of the word ; and to tap them, oil and coal are there for the taking. Transport is needed to link the raw material with the energy required, and this great railway scheme will assuredly supply the demand.

The new Pahlavi Government took a step forward when the Mejlis passed a law in Persia by which it abolished all taxes on goods in the interior, and substituted for these archaic impositions a schedule of dues to be collected at the Customs houses. By far the largest portion of its yield is earmarked for roads and transport. A German engineer is said to have been employed to report on the possibility of iron and steel manufacture to be used for the Persian railways, and an American railroad construction expert has surveyed the projected line.

The agricultural and mineral resources of the country are developing rapidly on account of the greater political security given to Persia by the regime of the Pahlavi Shah, so much so that the present means of transport are not adequate. Close upon 3000 motors have been imported in a year and no less than 198 motor trucks and a number of trailers were recently purchased for agricultural developments ; and when such enormous quantities of material are raised all over the country and sent through different parts of Persia over the road mileage of 3000 miles, the urgent necessity of a railway can be appreciated.

The work of the railway began simultaneously at the Mohammarah and the Caspian ends, one working up and the other down the country, so that the entire line should be completed with the least delay. Beyond the employment of the native labour and exploitation of mineral and

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agricultural resources, Persia has adopted an open-door policy towards all foreign help both in men and material, and whilst no concessions will be granted at the expense of the independence of the country, restrictions do not exist in the way of those who may consider it worth their while to serve this great task of civilization that Persia has in hand to-day. When this great steel highway between the Caspian and the Persian Gulf is opened and Persian areas are properly developed, the extent of trade passing in and out of the land of the Shahs could easily equal that of India, for Persia is still "virgin soil" in an economic sense.

They are not bothered with the rise of food prices in Persia. I remember when I was in Kermanshah bread was selling at seven pounds for twopence, mutton at twopence a pound, while sufficient fodder could be bought to feed a horse for a whole day for threepence. But Persians look upon fruit as their staple food and the ordinary meal of the labourer at present is a loaf of bread, a pound or two of grapes or apricots, or cucumbers, which are regarded as fruit. The popular drink is *mast*, or curdled milk, which is made by adding a little curdled milk to warm fresh milk. It is left to cool and sets in a few hours, leaving the cream on the top. For the first twenty-four hours, it is sweet and tastes like junket, but the Persians do not care for it until it has become acid or slightly fermented. Occasionally they add three parts of water to it, when it is known as *doogh*, a word which means the same thing as the Scottish "soor dook." Cheese often forms a portion of the morning meal with a little mint or onion.

There is, however, a very characteristic phase of the Persian life which anybody who has once seen it never forgets. It is the observance of the day of Moharram,

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A RUINED PUBLIC BUILDING IN PETRA

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when no one must use perfume, wear coloured garments, or even laugh audibly. Smiles are banished from the faces of its ten million people, and the people live through a week of mourning.

Year by year this "ceremony" has been faithfully observed for over a millennium there, for during that period of the year the Patron Saints of Persia—the grandsons of the Prophet Mohamed and their followers—were massacred by Yazid, the rival Arab chieftain in Karbella in Iraq.

Persia mourns for that day annually, and the practice of generations has hardened into something like a semi-religious tradition in that country. For ten days, "the black time," as it is called, plunges the whole of Persia into an atmosphere of gloom. No marriages are solemnized during that period, no foundation stones of buildings laid then, no work of importance undertaken. Women do not put kohl in their eyes, nor indulge in the use of cosmetics, nothing new is bought.

Days are passed in sullen meditation, green and black dresses are worn symbolizing the killing of one of the Martyrs by an arrow and of poisoning of the other brother. At night memorial meetings are held in mosques, in private homes, even in the open amongst the bearing trees of apricot and apples.

To these meetings young and old flock at the early hours of the evening. Women sit huddled in a corner wrapped in their long black shrouds or white cotton sheets, all a mass of sobbing, wailing humanity, as the priest mounts the pulpit to recite the battle scenes. With a voice trembling with emotion, he reads, then, choked with grief and passion, he pauses; the entire congregation rocks with tremendous wailing. "Oh! Oh!" they cry,

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"the sorrow is great, they were killed in cold blood, their children rendered orphans, their wives had to bare their heads before the cruel hordes." They weep on. And with swollen eyes and saddened faces, they trek back to their homes well past midnight to lay down awhile only to mourn again on the morrow.

Every day as the date progresses to the 10th of the lunar month, this life of mourning gathers momentum. The Persian capital city of Tehran is filled to overflowing by a steady trek into the town of the village folk to take part in the Passion Play. On that great day processions of mourners pass through the streets. I saw it from the roof of a house in the Poppy Avenue on the forenoon of that day.

The first indication of its approach was a weird sound of wailing, which seemed to be striking upon my ears from all the four directions of the compass. I could hardly locate it, but presently the thud of the drums, and distant mournful yells of the crowd indicated the right of the square. Drums sounded, and the shouts of the crowd became more and more resounding. The procession, at last, entered the square. First of all came men with small drums, then men bearing tall black flag-poles, with flags bearing Persian inscriptions pasted on them, passed us. This was followed by a goodly number of standard bearers, who bore scimitars, curiously reminiscent of a French revolutionary crowd as shown on the screen. These they held aloft in the air, and waved to and fro. But the most picturesque of all came behind these ; they were about half a dozen men holding a piece of black cloth tightly stretched between two poles, on which the inscriptions were sewn in gold thread.

The whole crowd, as far as one could see, was composed

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of men mourners in peculiar disguises, and the realistic touch was supplied by a number of men, who wore long white shirts, the fronts of which were besmeared with red paint to represent blood. They were beating upon their chests with all their force. Here and there in the crowd, you would see a devotee, fresh from Kerbella, beating upon his shirtless chest with a heavy spiked chain, the result being that in his case no red paint was required.

These were followed by a number of horsemen, representing the victorious army of Yazid, and then a magnificent horse was led which was supposed to be that of Yazid himself. A wailing chorus amongst the mourners was repeated every other minute—"Husain Chay Shud." "What happened to Husain?" asked a voice; and the mourners cried aloud: "Husain Shaheed Shud; Husain received Martyrdom," and they beat upon their breasts with great force and each time with renewed energy.

With the precision and timing of a well-drilled army, a thousand arms rose as one and hit against their bared chests and shaven heads alternatively. Then they formed into a little knot and everyone of them by turn beat upon the breast in correct obedience to their leader. Their faces were flushed, the intense rays of the sun poured upon countless reddened sore chests of the mourners. The women from the balconies or roof tops took up the chant every now and then; their shrill wailing seemed to sink my heart, and it is a scene which once seen is never forgotten, for till the blackness suddenly plunges Tehran into an ebony night this mourning goes on to end that sad period of Persia.

Not, however, till one travels to the north-western borders of that country, does one know what restless neighbours Persia has amongst the mountains of Kurdistan.

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Walking along the thick jungles that way, my guide—a true son of the wild mountain passes—related to me an old tale of his clansmen.

Although merely a hillman's story, yet nothing portrays the mind of a warrior Kurd more than this does, so I give it as related, a good comparison with the peaceful, almost docile temperaments of the Persians. It is the story of a Kurdish brigand : and although old in age, it might well be true to the conditions of to-day where no law but trigger law is obeyed on the frontier of Persia.

By no stretch of even the most romantic imagination, said my Kurdish guide, could the cavern of Suleiman, the brigand, be described as befitting its reputation. It was small, dark and decidedly damp, yet in this sordid den the predatory chieftain with whose name northern Persia rang, took such ease as he permitted himself.

It was a dismal afternoon in the rainy season. The wind wailed outside through the screen of stunted pines which faced the cave, and blew the smoke of the tiny fire which burned at its entrance over the head and shoulders of the bandit, so that it seemed as a veil round the torso of a mysterious prophet.

What Suleiman was actually doing it would be hard to say. Ask what a statue is engaged in, and you probably have the reply. He might have been sleeping ; he might have been thinking. But when the noise of footsteps on the twig-strewn path without crackled to his hearing, he became sufficiently alive, and raised a bearded and hawk-nosed face out of the folds of a huge camel-hair cloak.

A woman stood by the fire, veiled, and as motionless as himself. Such visits were more than infrequent in Suleiman's experience. He had not set eyes on a female form for quite a quarter of a year, yet he remained

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immovable. It was his invariable custom to permit visitors the first move.

"You are Suleiman?" the lady asked, keeping her face veiled.

The brigand bowed. "You have come to ransom someone?" he asked carelessly, "the tea merchant, perhaps?"

The shrouded form swayed a little. "No, I come on quite another errand," was the reply. "I have heard that Suleiman occasionally assists those in distress. Is it not so?"

"Such has happened," admitted the brigand.

"Ah, but this time there is no possibility of refusal," cried the veiled lady urgently. "Suleiman has been branded as a coward, will he accept the dishonour?"

Suleiman leapt to his feet, an oath on his bearded lips. Every man has his limit of endurance, and he had never in his life been taunted with cowardice. The experience was a strange one and his blood burned to liquid flame. In a couple of strides he crossed to where his visitor stood swaying, and with a single action he tore the veil from her head. It revealed a vision of terrified beauty at which he stepped back amazed—great luminous eyes gleaming in a face of golden fairness, quivering lips of loveliness, a mass of wavy hair. But frightened as she was, the lady still evidently retained sufficient courage to go through with her mission.

"That has touched you, Suleiman the Black," she laughed. "You may think me a fool to brave you in your fastness, but my brother is a prisoner—and what will a true woman not do for her brother?"

"You speak in riddles," growled Suleiman. "Come to the point."

"My brother, the Sirdar Giafar, is, or was, a general

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in the army of the Shah ; you have heard of him. The rebels have taken him prisoner. They have not only loaded him with chains, and treated him foully, but have accused him of cowardice, saying that his defeat was due to panic. He was inconsolable at the charge, and in his wrath has flung to them a challenge. He has undertaken, if they set him free, to capture you single-handed—that is, unless you prefer to come down under safe conduct to Tehran and face him sword in hand, as man to man."

Suleiman stared. Then he laughed, loud and long.

"The impertinence of your proposal is amazing," he cried at last. "Am I to be the fool of any soldier who desires to vindicate his honour ?"

"You recognize the alternative ?" said the woman scathingly. "You will be branded as a coward through the length and breadth of Persia. How will Suleiman the Black relish such a reputation ?"

"After all, I am a bandit, one who lives on plunder. Should I prevail, what is my reward ?"

"The reward," answered the woman dully, "is myself, for so I have agreed with my brother. Will not that suffice ?"

Suleiman the Black halted in his prowling gait. "Truly," he said, not without admiration, "you must love your brother. But, foolish one, what is to prevent me from keeping you here if I wish, which, by the way, I have no particular desire to do ?"

"Your manhood," was the curt reply, "which I am confident even a Suleiman has not altogether lost. Your answer ?"

Suleiman laughed once more, shortly this time. "You have won," he said. "I shall go with you to the capital and shall fight the Sirdar Giafar."

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Tehran at the commencement of the year 1700 was by no means the Tehran of the Shah of to-day. Its old-time atmosphere pervaded it. The schools and colleges were unknown, the aerodrome was not there, no Ministries teemed with up-to-date officials in European dress. Instead the spirit of the backward East was triumphant. Long-robed mullahs and bearded tribesmen in turban and sheepskin took the place of smart artillerymen and citizens ill at ease in lounge suits.

Said, the general of the then Shah, might confidently be described as of the older school. As he sat sipping coffee with Kalyan at full blast, he would have provided an excellent study for an artist in search of a human example of the unchanging East. Squatting on a cushion, he seemed to sleep rather than to live. It was only in the midst of battle that he ever really woke up. Even at the subsequent division of loot he appeared somnolent, though no one ever dreamed of cheating him. That would have been about as sensible as to snatch a lamb from the jaws of a tiger. But now he was to receive news which would galvanize him sufficiently.

"Sirdar—my father," said one approaching him with a low salaam, "the Lady Kulsum, sister of Giafar, has returned bringing with her Suleiman the Black."

The mouthpiece of his Kalyan fell from Said's bearded lips. "By the hoof of the Father of Evil!" he cried, "but a strange thing has come to pass. That the wolf of the hills should descend to the city!" And Said marvelled all the more, because he, too, had been a brigand. "Bring them before me," he commanded.

They came, lady and bandit, the one closely veiled, as the new-old order provided, the other grave but not unsmiling. They stood before Said in silence.

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"Suleiman," rasped the General, "what is this? Know you what you do?"

"She who is with me has told me all," replied the bandit. "I fight with Giafar. Should I conquer she falls to my lot, should I fall . . ."

"Then a brigand has his pride?" laughed Said very sourly.

"My lord should know," answered the Suleiman with an obeisance. "When do I fight Giafar?"

"At once, if you so choose," grunted the General. "And you have the right to make conditions. You have been branded as a coward, a serious charge for a Persian. Will you fight on foot or on horseback, with tulwars or with the long rifle?"

"With the tulwar and on horseback," said the brigand roughly. "Bring forth your defeated enemy, and let us see what sort of a man has dared to dub Suleiman the Black as a poltroon."

If the city had seemed somnolent when Suleiman and the lady Kulsum entered it, it grew lively enough when the news that a combat was impending gained currency. Thousands gathered on the broad green space without the gates, and it was all that a strong guard of Said's irregulars could do to prevent the mob from swarming over the field.

At last the combatants appeared. Suleiman on a tall white Arab, silent, confident in poise; Giafar on a bright bay in the uniform of the Shah's army, broad-chested, yet elegant. Both reined their steeds before the seat of Said the General.

"This," boomed Said sententiously, "is a combat of honour. The ex-General Giafar, accused of cowardice, has offered to free himself from the charge by fighting the brigand Suleiman, whom men call 'the Invincible,' and

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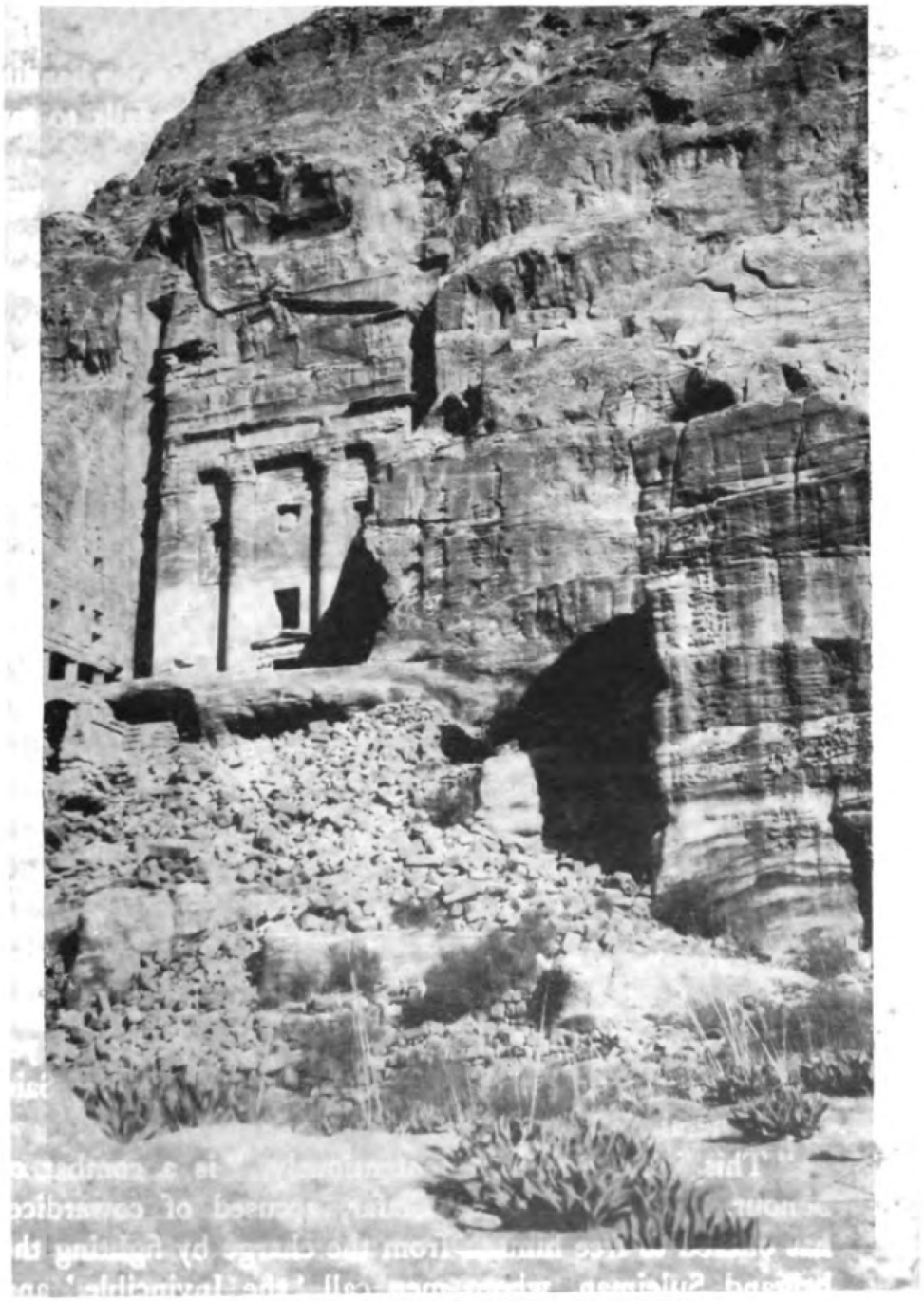

RUINS OF ANCIENT TOMBS IN PETRA

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whose courage none has ever questioned. The combat is, therefore, bound to be one to the death. Let it commence forthwith."

At the word the combatants wheeled their horses, rode some fifty yards from the General's seat, and, setting spurs, dashed at each other. Clashing, their tulwars met in the air like silver streaks, and played lightly above their heads in fantastic radiance in the afternoon sunlight. Suleiman sat his saddle easily, like a cavalier, the Sirdar Giafar, more heavily, as a trained horseman, yet doggedly, rising now and then for the vantage of the stroke. Round and round each other they circled, neither having the advantage, each fencing for an opening. Then the Sirdar's tulwar fell like the beak of a hawk, and a thin stream of blood trickled down the bandit's left arm. The crowd shouted.

"A shrewd stroke," muttered Said, like a connoisseur, "had it been the sword arm . . ."

The brigand chief gave back, drawing careful rein, evidently heeding not at all his hurt. Then suddenly he charged, smote, and Sirdar Giafar rolled from the saddle, an ugly gash on his brow. He staggered, wiped his forehead with a gilded sleeve, and, on foot as he was, rushed at his adversary, his teeth clenched, his eyes gleaming through the blood which poured down his face.

But Suleiman spurred and avoided him, then springing from his horse, advanced to meet him. That both men were sorely hurt was obvious to the onlookers. Said glanced at the Lady Kulsum, who, still closely veiled, stood silent and statuesque.

"Now," said Suleiman to himself, as he warded off the blows of the bleeding Sirdar. "What does the woman wish? Truly there is no comprehending women. If I kill her brother she will detest me. If I allow him to

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kill me, she will remember me as a weakling. Which is the worst! The curse of Sheitan on it, but I cannot get those eyes of her out of my head. Bah, I must resort to an ancient trick."

The tulwars met, clashed, and Giafar's fell, his right hand with it, severed at the wrist by a single sweeping back-blow. His sleight of swordmanship had served Suleiman well.

That evening, with safe conduct, the brigand and the Lady Kulsum rode out of Tehran. When at last the guards left them Suleiman turned to her.

"You seem displeased, lady," he said with a grave smile. "Yet I did what a man might in the circumstances. I saved the life of your brother, mine own honour and his. What would you? Now I offer you your freedom. Go back to him and you will."

"I do not break my word," she replied sombrely. "A woman has her honour, too. I am willing to pay the price."

"I am a bandit," replied Suleiman, "not a torturer. You are free to return to your kinsman."

"To an armless man!" she retorted.

"All the more reason why you should return to him," said the brigand roughly. "You will provide him with hands."

They rode on in silence for some time. It was sunset, the shadows of night were gathering.

"Perhaps," said the Lady Kulsum, "perhaps I do not wish to return to Tehran."

"Woman," murmured Suleiman, as if to himself, "is, after all, but the shadow of man. Where he is there must she be also, and the greater the man, the greater she, the shadow."

At this the Lady Kulsum seemed strangely agitated.

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"Truly," she said haughtily, "that man has need of all his manliness who wears his bugle by his side and blows it often to arouse his own courage, to awake his belief in himself. That, at least, Giafar never did."

"Bah!" chuckled Suleiman with a sour smile, "now that he hath no hand to raise his bugle . . ."

"Coward," she flashed, "to belittle a better man, whom, after all, you conquered by a brigand's trick of fence."

"Silence!" hissed Suleiman, "you are now my slave, and impertinence in a brigand's slave is usually punished by the lash."

Kulsum grew pale. "What mean you?" she asked incredulously. "The lash!"

"Aye, the lash, which your handless brother could not give you." Suleiman was very harsh now. "A daily dose of that . . ."

"Oh," cried she, reining in, "this is intolerable. I believed you to be a cavalier at least, if an untamed one. But I find you only a brute. I shall return to Tehran."

"Not so," and Suleiman caught her bridle. "You have made your bed and must lie thereon. Another word, woman, and I lay my whip across your back."

On and on they rode, now through the darkness of the night. The blackness of a deep donga loomed before them.

"I shall ride on in front a little," he announced. "This donga is dangerous, for the chief who guards it has no compunction regarding travellers, be they merchant or bandit. Follow me."

He pressed forward into the darkness, and when he had ridden some fifty yards, halted and waited. He did not hear the Lady Kulsum following. Indeed, he heard the noise of a horse galloping quickly away in the opposite direction.

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Suleiman rose in his stirrups and laughed a great laugh. "It is well," he said, "the Imams know I did not want her. They are all the same. Throw them one kind word, and they will follow you to Sheol, but growl at them . . ."

And, well content, he cantered back to his cavern. The fire was lit, and, weary, he cast himself on a couch of dry grass.

He was on the verge of sleep, when he heard someone clamber up the slope. Rising, he sought the entrance and looked out into the night. Kulsum stood before him. He uttered an exclamation.

"You!" he said.

"Yes, lord. You are right. Woman is but the shadow of man."

The brigand cursed heartily. "I wished you away," he foamed, "so I dissembled. Know that I could not chasten you if I would. I am not the savage you think me. Begone, return to Tehran, for, verily I have played a part, have lied to you, because I would be alone."

"It is not good that you should be alone," she said decidedly, "for a shadowless man is a man bewitched, so I shall stay here. In Tehran there is nothing for me, for after all, I am of the old time, and hate the veiled cities. And the spirit of woman craves for the wild. I shall cook your food and care for your wants, my lord," and she made obeisance to him.

"Now," said Suleiman to himself, "this is my punishment, but, by my guardian angel, it is much too severe." And aloud he said: "As thou wilt, woman, but I pray you, be gentle with my belongings here, nor disturb this place any more than the devil which possesses all women tempts thee to do."

And the Lady Kulsum, glancing round at the confusion

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of the cavern, smiled the age-long smile of woman, which is the doom of such comfortable confusion.

After much journeying on land, I resolved to try an air trip in Persia. Who can doubt that Persia has the faculty of capturing hearts to an extraordinary degree, but there is one exception to this indisputable fact. It was borne upon me every minute of this day when waiting for the notice to appear in the local press regarding a Junker's passenger aeroplane from Tehran. In vain I scanned the paper every morning for that notice ; and walked up to the Company's offices in the Poppy Avenue with no more success.

At last the truth was revealed that the proposed flight would certainly take place ; but as to when the aeroplane might leave the capital was a point which could only be decided by the Postmaster-General—for without a sufficient number of mail bags the passenger aerial service was not worth while economically. So I waited for weeks together for that business proposition to arise.

Whilst thus holding myself in readiness for a flight, I had opportunities of familiarizing myself with much that was useful and interesting in connection with the adventure of Junker's organization. They are an Eastern branch of a very powerful German concern, and whereas quite a few of their machines are old bought-over German army stock, a number of four-seater aeroplanes are the models of civil aviation. In the experimental stage of their work in Persia, I was told they gave joy-rides of ten minutes for even less than half a karan ; but for longer journeys later on, for instance, between Tehran and Meshad or the Persian Gulf Coast or to Qasr Shoreen, their charges were by no means cheap.

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This company has its offices at Tehran, Mohammarah, Asfahan, Meshad, and Bunder Pahlavi ; the last-named joins on to Baku, and Meshad connects with Tashkend ; and then both, according to their respective geographical conditions, complete the link with the Black Sea on one side and Moscow on the other. Practically all the pilots are highly skilled Germans ; of the mechanics I am not sure, they might have been the Don Cossacks for all one could judge from their bearing and dialect. The workers in the offices are all Germans, blond, blue-eyed giants, they are, with characteristic close-cropped hair, the epitome of efficiency and in demeanour almost docile. They speak English often much better than " plucked B.A.'s " of India; and frequently show their national trait of assuredness by not inviting you to insure your life before a flight in one of their machines. " You see," they say, " we take no chances ! " It was, perhaps, as well that they want to take no risks because they are very keen to get the monopoly of civil aviation from the Persian Government, which would ensure a weekly transit of mails in all parts of the country. Even a single crash they cannot afford.

After weeks of waiting, early one morning I was informed by telephone to get to Doshan Tapai, the aviation ground outside Tehran within half a hour in order to take my seat in the aeroplane that must leave before midday. They had telegraphic report to say that " the air was good for flight." No more than a handbag was I allowed as luggage ; and as I got into the four-seater, I was delighted to see that of the four seats only three were to be occupied, the fourth being used for the Postmaster-General's mail bags. My companions, a Baghdad merchant and a Persian Customs official, were perhaps less concerned about the safety of the craft than I, as having once experienced a crash my

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nerves were somewhat jumpy. But, unlike the others, I had desisted from having a full breakfast and had stuffed my ears with cotton-wool.

The neat craft like a silver fish roared and shook with the whirling of the propeller, then it ran a full hundred yards, then turned, and getting up a tremendous speed, rose without the least " feeling " over the telegraph wire, then up, and up, swung round from the side of the mighty Demavand eastward, soaring high above the City of the Shahs ; the military parade ground surrounded by the Cossacks' barracks, the box-like houses of the people, the white ribbon road to the shrine of the Great Saint, all lying under us like a model map and we were high above, ten thousand feet or more.

On and on, and we climbed the backs of the clouds, then dropped in an air pocket, then rose again ; and where green fields and hamlets could be spotted one could see the black and white streaks of snow just covering the wells, wells that looked like ants' holes all in a row. A wall of mountains rose and faded away in the distance like a corrugated piece of a frozen moon. The snow had just fallen and we sped up and then down for an hour. " I do not like this carriage ! " shouted the Baghdadi, as he fumbled for his paper bag to empty the contents of his stomach. He could not wait and spoilt my new sheepskin coat. The Persian was going to follow him, I thought, till he, finding his flask, applied it to his lips : " If you are not Musalman Agha," he addressed me apologetically, " this juice would benefit you ! " I, however, refused the red wine ; but he also could not retain it long ; and little wonder, too, for we were just negotiating the highest spurs of Hamadan ; the air had a strong smell, I was getting short of breath, too, a fleecy whiteness coated every-

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thing below. Nothing was moving, not a dark spot on the ground was visible, only the thudding of the engine ; the revolving meter before the pilot moved, showing South-West, then West, and then all of a sudden a giant of a cloud, black and rain-laden, stood before us. The machine plunged into nothingness, as it were, and as it climbed up I noticed that the direction of the course had been reversed, we were heading for the east.

It was growing cold, bitterly cold. I wrapped myself in Posteen, my head swam, and reaching for my muffler, I tied it round my neck, for I was past caring that a part of it was soaked by the newly-fermented wine which the Persian had " refused." The stench of the oil (or was it the lack of oxygen up in the high air ?) had dazed me. The other two lay limp and half dead, the rosary beads of the Baghdadi hung in his Kafiyah headgear, the Pahlavi hat of the Persian was on the back of his head, his mouth wide open, almonds had fallen from his palm.

Gradually the machine descended to a lower altitude, and, gathering my wits, I stared down ; we were hovering over what looked to me a strange town. Round and round that Persian city we flew, and although low enough, I could not tell that it was Hamadan ; and ultimately, with a sweep barely six feet over the telegraph wire, the aeroplane galloped over a rain-sodden patch, one of the wheels sank deep into the mud, and with a thud, we stopped.

The three of us were alive, but that was about all. The German mechanic unlocked the door, and beckoned me to alight. I dragged myself to the ground but the other two could not move, and preferred to stay awhile where they were. Like one lost to the world, I paced to the edge of the field in a half trance. By degrees my senses began to revive. Troops of men and women were hurrying

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to where the "devil's own cart had descended from the clouds." They encircled me, fixing me with pitying looks, scarcely believing their eyes that men who went up the skies could come down alive. "Are you speechless, Mirza?" asked a wild-looking Kurd. I shook my head, they thought I was from Arabistan or a Russian, or maybe a Turk, for Astrakhan caps are not Persian headgear. English merchants also came to the aerodrome, a donkey-driver offered to take me to the Chai Khanay or the tea booth, "to roast my back," as he styled it. The Grand Hotel there is a misnomer. It is neither grand, nor is it an hotel, in the sense that these terms are applied where English is spoken; yet many cups of milky tea, in tall glass Finjans, warmed me sufficiently to understand the German pilot to say that we had really passed Hamadan, but had to return to make a forced landing there, because the weather changed suddenly. I was not sorry for this change! No flight was promised till days got longer, and in the meantime all passes were frozen up on account of snow, even for horse carriages, but a motor managed to get me out of it. Yet for days together men and boys alike would follow me in the street to have a look at the man who journeyed in the "infidels'" sky carriage, and still lives, and what is more, that he speaks Persian; "truly the ways of Allah and the Imams are wonderful," they thought; "or is the world coming to an end, that living men float in the air thuswise!" Whisperingly they spoke in the Chai Khanay.

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CHAPTER IX

THE TWO FACES OF TURKESTAN

IN my way of thinking, three regions of the Middle East are of special interest to those who wish to understand India and her conditions ; they are Turkestan, Afghanistan, and the North-West Frontier Province of India. In my own country of Afghanistan, happily, affairs are now put right by the extraordinary skill and personal sacrifice of the present monarch ; yet the story of her recent tragedy is a little too young to be expanded in the narrative. It has a significance of its own, and when it comes to be written in full, I have reason to believe that it would startle the world. But the time is not yet.

Regarding the changing facets of Bolshevik Turkestan, in the lap of which lies Golden Samarkand, I must say something though, in passing ; as also depict the scenes of the regions where dwell the men of Talwar and real valour, in the no-man's-land in and around the famous Khyber Pass.

As the Bokharian priest from the minaret concluded the attestment " that there is no God but one God," the hush in the public Ragistan was broken. Booth shops were being removed hurriedly from the public highway, outriders were shouting at venerable looking gentlemen to make way. " Step aside, step aside ! " they commanded, in their Turki language ; " Give respect to the mighty ruler, the Amir of Bokhara ; your lord and our lord, the

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defender of the faith." The alert Kirghiz of the Steppes, the dreamy-eyed Uzbeks from the four corners of Central Asia, the murmuring Tajiks, even burly Afghans and fat Hindu moneylenders all the way from Delhi, jumped to their feet, to let the Juloos of the lord of all Turkestan pass to the Friday prayer.

First came the Akcha Bashi, riding at the head of a hundred Turkomans cavalry, then the sword-bearing Akhoons on foot, four score or more, followed by the high priest of the shrines of Hazrat Bahaaddin ; and in the quietness to which the respectful spectators had fallen, you could hear the jingling bells from a charger's neck echo and re-echo behind the walls of the great Mosque as it blended with the deep-toned prayers of Jan-Nisaran or the Amir's bodyguards. Anon the grey mare rounded the corner, a man wearing a large white round turban and covered with a loose coat of shimmering green holding the reins of his steed in his hands, came in view. Frequently his right hand, covered up as it was to the tips of the fingers by a tapering sleeve, rose and touched his breast in acknowledgement of the salutations of his subjects on the way. Two long-robed and barefooted servants ran beside the monarch's mount, holding on to the stirrups. His pale ivory complexion accentuated his somewhat Mongolian features, drooping eyes and a sparse beard. Men bent low, as he passed, those tiny silver bells in his mare's neck tinkling merrily all the way. " Jan-Salamat, Jan Salamat—May thy life be always safe," they murmured.

This was twenty years ago, when Central Asia was still free from Soviet influences. And now !

To-day's conditions in the changing East may be symptomatic of the time in which we live, but even this does not seem to justify the change perceptible in Bokhara. What

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were once the Khanates are now the Soviet Republics of Uzbekistan, Tajikstan, Turkomanistan and even the nomad tribes of the Steppes are to have a Soviet Republic of their own. The man whose father rode in majestic style through the crowded bazaars of Bokhara or Samarkand, is, of course, a refugee in Afghanistan ; or at least was living fairly comfortably at Quillah Murad near Kabul till the fall of Amanullah.

On the political chess-board the Khanates have always been a pawn in the game. The Czarist regime dismantled the principality of Khokand, and isolated Bokhara by annexing Turkomania, and the Steppes to their Tashkend Province ; withal there remained two chief states of Khiva and Bokhara under their own rulers. It was the removal of the Amirs of these two States by Bolshevik revolutionaries that completed Russia's hegemony right down to the northern confines of Afghanistan.

When the Amir of Bokhara was driven out of his country, the Young Uzbek Party, taking control of the administration, declared it to be a Soviet Republic, and it was acknowledged as such by Moscow. The capital was transferred to Samarkand and the peasant rule installed. The Republic, however, is free so far as its internal administration is concerned. The people have to levy their own taxes, manage the departments of agriculture, industry, and education ; but both the defence and the foreign affairs are directly controlled by the Centre at the Bolshevist capital in Europe. Also the economic policy is in the hands of Moscow. There is an Uzbek Parliament which in turn is represented in the Bolshevik Central Government.

During pre-Revolution times in Central Asia some nine million acres of land were under cultivation ; more than half produced cotton, and now quite a large area of the waste

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ground which they are breaking is being prepared by the Soviet Government for cotton, which like the present would come under the monopoly of Moscow. The Cotton Trust of Pakhta-Aral farm near Tashkend is raising seed for that purpose. The irrigation dam at Revet Khoja is a new scheme near Samarkand, which has been financed and run by the Russians.

Not only has Turkestan a number of Soviet Republics, but every village boasts of its local self-governing units. Education is given on a co-operative system, with the idea of everyone for all and all for the State. Large, but ugly, buildings are peeping out here and there amidst the cluster of historical monuments dating back to the day of Timur, the Mullahs are merely Mullahs again, for whereas previously they were ruling over the people in the guise of religion, they now do so in the name of Red Russia. The " grey-beard " of the village who held his position due to landed property and inheritance is once more the power amongst the peasants, as the President of the Soviet of his village.

But nowhere would you see the colour of the new and the old butting against each other in Bokhara as on the eve of the opening of the local Soviet. Elderly men wearing long striped robes of many colours ride on donkeys half their own size, they dig into the sides of the mounts with their shoeless feet. Mournful looking Tajiks with plush cloth skull caps sell slices of melons to passers-by ; and the sweet-seller weighs out a pound of flaked mulberry toffee as, twisting his bearded lip, he draws your attention not to smother the flame of his smoky light with the tapering sleeve of your quilted coat ; and the young and old sip innumerable cups of tea in the half-light of smoke-laden atmosphere of Chai Khanay or the wayside teashop.

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Presently, the holy town crier tears his way through the crowd. He is differently dressed : for no long coat or skull cap of his native origin does he use ; instead, a white shirt, tied at the waist, a red tie and long boots, make him conspicuous. True, he wears a skull cap. But it is red in colour. He is leading the procession of the members of the Soviet to their Parliament house.

It is a longish room of purely Asiatic style where they hold their meetings. At the dais sit the President and other deputies in charge of Government departments. The Turki language is being used, and deliberations are frequently withheld till it is all translated into Russian, so that some eighty-odd members, " the Europeans," consisting of Jews and Russians, could participate. At the back of the President's chair, inscriptions exhorting upon the workers of the world to unite for revolution are hung, and a bust of Lenin peeps behind the many folds of crimson silk, whilst obscure red electric light plays upon the members of the executive. Women members sit cross-legged on the chairs, proud of their new-found liberty, and rise again and again addressing the President. And as soon thrust back to their seats. Then a gruff voice gurgles through the hall. It is a giant of a Turkoman camel driver who speaks : " I know little of fine speech," he growls at the President, " but knowest thou, O Comrade, that mine brother can buy no ploughs of iron, whereas rich peasant can, on State aid. Say thou ! the great Comrade of all ! Whether thus wise revolution . . ." He intended to say more, much more, when two hefty men bore him literally away, his mouth securely gagged.

Not very far from Bokhara and Samarkand lies Tashkend in the north of the Khanates. The town has figured very prominently in the Russian revolutionary history,

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being a seat from which Bolshevik propaganda was first directed against the British Empire. And although much of the keen edge of that propaganda is now blunted, voices are still raised very justifiably against it. Therefore, I have taken some pains to discover the real truth about the existence and progress of the Russian movements in this regard, which might be detailed here in the hope that their correct comprehension will afford a new angle of vision.

Can Bolshevik Propaganda be Stopped ?

Before ever discussing the subject of propaganda, we must be sure whether we correctly understand the meaning of the word. In common language the term stands for the spreading of certain principles and extension of some particular form of religious or political ideals.

In Soviet Russia they uprooted the terror-ridden rule of the Czars in 1917 and began to cast their system of government into the new moulds of Socialism. Two such diametrically opposed political dogmas they had to reconcile ; and for this an intense form of propaganda was needed. The Bolsheviks had to stamp out the last vestige of what was before Lenin preached in the Red Square of Moscow. No doubt the iron hand worked with that iron will, backed by ruthlessness, which characterizes the advent of such world-wide movement as was the Russian upheaval. During a revolution you cannot afford to regard the silk stockings and velvet coat. All that savoured of Russia of old had to go or the new order could not survive.

By saying this, I do not condone the atrocities of the Red Regime. I am endeavouring to interpret the facts of history as they appear in their nakedness before an impartial eye. And propaganda par excellence had to be employed and shall be continued with unabated effort,

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as long as Communist ideas sit enthroned at Moscow. So far no man can dispute the usefulness of Communist propaganda in the interest of Russia alone.

In the vast areas of Asia and Europe, which were under the Czars, an intensive propagation of the new order was possible through active and persistent preaching, whereby it could be proved that the Soviet ideal was better than what preceded it. For by its instrumentality alone could they strengthen their claims to be the heirs of the Czarist regime, as also to give the power thus acquired a permanent shape. I, therefore, maintain that the Red propaganda in its essence was a political necessity for the Russians for their own domestic reasons.

Gradually, however, when the Soviets had more or less set their house in order, there is no denying the fact that their zeal to give the world what they thought was good for it, produced a disturbing element. That phase of it we have learnt to call Russian Propaganda against the British Empire. But has it really been anti-British? What are the facts? Proofs galore there are to substantiate the belief that some of the most distinguished of Lenin's disciples have never made any attempt to hide their anti-British proclivities. But surely that trait of mind is not necessarily the outcome of the Soviet mentality, for what about the tense moments which prevailed time and again in the Czarist diplomatic circles almost from the years when John Company began to show territorial expansion in India, and Great Britain manifested uneasiness over the Russo-Afghan dealings so long ago as Amir Shair Ali Khan's time. And what about those designs of Napoleon persuading the Czar to invade India? Vambery described it so well in 1885 in his book *The Coming Struggle for India*.

If, then, we get agitated over what Russia of to-day is

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HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS, AMIR FEISUL, GOVERNOR OF MECCA

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doing against English interests, we forget the Asian history which deals with the expansion of the two great Powers in the East. Each has been complaining of its rival many years before the present generation was born. It is not England that Russia specially wishes to undermine, for if any other nation, say Japan, ever conceived an idea of thwarting the expansion of the Russian Empire, then no love would be lost even between those two countries. You are never against a nation, you merely wish to remove its power from your political path. That is what Russia has done and what Russia, if her people are human, will continue to do. This has always been the historical destiny of all nations, great or small, which ever left a mark on the countries of the world. It is a law of imperial expansion past man's control.

From all this an important factor arises, which is that propaganda is carried on by Russia for vindicating her form of government. Her sons have so perfected the art that the art has now become a mechanical appliance. It operates with the precision of a machine. And here is the crux of the whole matter. That machine has become so that it has passed much beyond their own control. Do not ask the Soviets to stop propaganda. They cannot do it. They are not masters of that giant monster. Lord Curzon, Mr. MacDonald, Sir Austen Chamberlain, all tried to have commitments from Russia; the cessation of propaganda was promised ; I am almost tempted to say that an honest attempt has also been made to keep the pledge ; but as I have explained, you asked them what they could not do.

In the face of the facts, there is only one remedy, barracade your own imperial frontiers, do not allow the propaganda to trickle through the fine mesh that you can create.

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With diverse devices at your command you certainly can erect barriers which the Red propagandist could not cross. It has already been done with great success ; why not resort to it alone, and not raise a cry in the wilderness : " Stop anti-British propaganda." They cannot stop it, the bridle of the fiery steed is no longer in their hands. And it is the whole truth, if the Russians had the courage to own it ; and the British Empire could only see it. For if propaganda was stopped, the life-sap of the present Russian system of government would be stopped. And they have no desire to commit a political suicide.

The Way of the Afridi.

As you travel India-ward, you come to a country rich in contrasts, where the Afridi and other clans dwell, but you cannot understand the Afridi mind apart from his environment ; also he is one of a large family, inasmuch as there are marked affinities of ancestry, language and religion amongst the various clansmen who inhabit the sun-smitten gullies of the Borderland. The territory stretching from the Pamirs to Baluchistan, bounded on the west by Afghanistan and on the east by the Punjab, is the proper North-West Frontier Province of India. It has three divisions, of Hazar, Peshawar—Kohat—Banu, and Dera Ismail Khan. Practically in all these areas the present tribal agitation is perceptible ; but its intensity is more marked in a rugged mountainous region known as " No Man's Land," or the Independent Area.

Over this independent territory the British Government has but a nominal control, which it exercises through its political officers. Further in the north again, Chitral, Swat and Dir are petty chiefdoms under Political Officers.

The first group of clans which inhabit this province of

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nearly eight hundred miles, working north—southwards, are the Swatis and Bonairs, dispensing with Chitral as a semi-independent country. Little over 15,000 men in each province, they are not distinguished for their fighting ability. Adjacent to these are the Mahmand, about 60,000 souls, whose country is barren, and the inhabitants are entirely under the domination of the priests.

Next to them are the warlike tribesmen of the Afridis, numbering about sixty thousand, who claim the ownership of the famous Khyber Pass. For their good-will they were originally paid annually two lakhs of rupees, but now, on account of the Khyber Railway, this sum has been increased to three lakhs.

It is the duty of these clansmen to keep the Khyber road safe for travellers up to a boundary line of twenty-five yards on either side. On Tuesday and Friday of each week caravans pass through the Khyber between Jamrud and Dekka, to or from Afghanistan.

The clans of next importance after the Bunair, Swat, Mahmands and Afridis, ranging from north to south, are the Waziris, Mahsoods and Orikzais. Of these the Waziris are the largest, with about 70,000 men. The Madsoods have about 15,000 and are very great fighters. Neither of these has any settled way of life. One of them is the Keeper of Gomel Pass, but they do not receive in payment any sum approaching the amount which is received by the Afridis. Thus there is a perpetual atmosphere of unrest at work among these frontier warriors ; they are always ready to raid their neighbours' territory, to fight among themselves, or to make war against the British Government.

In character, if an Afghan is a born fighter, the Afridi and his kinsmen are, indeed, born adventurers, for Mother

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Earth leaves them no choice. Miles and miles of rock, mountains, stunted shrubs on which he can hardly rear his goat is all that an Afridi has. Here and there tufts of dry grass cluster on the parched brown soil, and now and again a partridge may start up at the feet of a traveller with a shrill cry and a whirring of wings. There is no water for any extensive agriculture. A more desolate wilderness can scarcely be imagined. What wonder, then, that the men who inhabit it look with eyes of envy towards the rich plains of Hindustan, and occasionally raid it ; but when not so occupied, you can see them any day ploughing their rock-strewn patches with rifles slung upon their shoulders for the off-chance of a sweep on a caravan or the exchange of rifle-pleasantries with rival clansmen.

The clans live in walled villages with watch-towers that are manned twenty-four hours of the day and night, and the head man, or the Chief, is the only law-giver they know or obey.

Nothing provided me with a better study of Afridi life than to see a Chieftain start with his men on a raid. A shot rang out in the distant crest of the hill, and putting his tea-cup down, he hurriedly excused himself as he looked down the watch-tower. His men on the edge of the cliff were throwing earth over the bonfire. Another report of the rifle shot made up the mind of my host. He had no time to waste persuading me to accompany him on his "little walk," as he called it, for the passing caravan, which his scout's shots had announced, would not wait.

A stern, chill moon shone upon the watch-tower as he, lowering his rope ladder, climbed down to the ground. With matchlocks, and rifles of many descriptions slung over their shoulders, his followers had to jump down the wall as best as they could, the sun-baked earth from the wall skittering under their feet all the way.

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A few days afterwards, when I met the very same leader of the Khyber men again in a different village at a feast, he related to me the story of that night. They had "met the poor travellers to Central Asia, and had relieved them of their burden, for it was too heavy for them to carry," laughed the brigand chief. The adventure was simply told.

Tinkling bells from afar off announced the caravan of lumbering camels. The faces of his men were pressed against the brown-rugged rocks, still warm with the day's heat. Onward it came, made up of a hundred loaded camels, like a giant dragon twisting its tortuous way through the mountain passes. The huddled forms of Tajik camel drivers lay snoring on their animals. . . . "Hold, fire!" thundered the Chief to his followers, and yelling, shouting men fell on the caravan in a trice.

The caravan-leader twitched instinctively at the reins of his hill pony. His hand leaped up to his gun, and a piece of the Chief's skin was ripped from his cheek—and behind them, so this leader of the Borderland renegades told me, they left a surging din of gun-fire, which did not touch them, even though they were carrying the heavy loads of the caravan.

And such is the life-story of the world's most romantic and adventurous people, only a few miles away from the civilization of British India, and yet proud of their ancestry and valour. Recent movements there, however, have given clear evidence of the fact that the thoughts of nationalism are creeping upon their imagination : for, indeed, they are a totally different people from the Indians. I cannot desist from relating a narrative of these lovable frontier people to show how chivalry of untamed sons of Asia blends with the romance of adventure in the land around the Khyber Pass.

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The Ferungie Pays his Debt.

The fact that Hamid Khan had just finished his prayer did not deter him from planning vengeance, for a man cannot carry revenge in his heart for long without its becoming a part of himself, and Hamid Khan had already waited for two years. "Of a truth, by the hoof of the Evil One," he muttered to himself, "as an opportunity has not occurred I will even create one, and take my way to the land of the Ferungies who, unfortunately, but little appreciate my noble calling, and care not to welcome me in their land."

True it was that he had not been too well treated the last time he had ventured beyond the safety of his own hills into Peshawar, where he had perforce been obliged to go for a rifle, so dear to the hearts of the men who live beyond the Khyber. There is an explanation for most things, and the fact that the owner had given his life as well as his weapon was sufficient for anyone whose calling differed from that of this Frontier man. "But what did it matter about the Ferungie anyway," thought he, "he is one less, and I would that he had been the one who murdered my brother Habeeb Khan, on whom be peace. Was it not such an one who killed my brother after calling him a pig, the worst insult on a Pathan, and one that can only be wiped out in blood."

It was vengeance for this, then, that Hamid Khan thirsted. "Time hangs heavily on these hands of mine," murmured the Pathan to himself, "and I would have things out with the Ferungie Captain who lives in the land of Hindustan." And the Pathan touched his Afghan knife lovingly. "Of a truth will I go to that land of pestilence as a trader, so will I find this Ferungie, for as a trader none will suspect my intention, and by the help of Allah

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will I square the deal with the Kaffir." After which comforting thought Hamid Khan drew a hissing breath and spat forcefully to relieve his feelings. " It is a way after mine own heart," he said chuckling in his beard, for the Captain must think the affair long forgotten, while the privilege of forgetting is mine ! " He arose, put away his hookah, adjusted his turban, and taking his stick, proceeded to the village Bazaar, where he spent a few of his scanty store of rupees on some rugs, which he hoisted on his shoulder, smiling all the while at his shrewdness. " These rugs will stand me well in the land of the Ferungies who fly devil machines and eat pig. Not a hint shall I drop to my kinsmen lest my purpose fail and I become the butt and jest of every beardless youth in the village."

Difficulties as to road expenses might arise, but it was only to outward appearance that Hamid Khan was a peaceful trader. No one knew better, when necessity arose, how to extract the rupees from the Hindoo moneylenders, wary and otherwise. So the fact that his money-belt was uncomfortably empty caused neither discontent nor discouragement to him. Grasping his stout stick he set forth along the hill road with the easy stride of a man accustomed to walking long distances. The rugs dangled over his left shoulder, a mixture of happiness and revenge was in his heart, and the words Allah-ho-Akbar—God is great—were on his lips. From time to time he met fat bunias—moneylenders —making their way in their usual ponderous gait to collect outstanding monies due to them. It must have been for a considerable sum, for only in these circumstances do the ease-loving Hindoos care to brave the perils that await such as they in the narrow and danger-fraught hill passes. These Shylocks cast uneasy glances at the big Pathan with the best of good reasons. But Hamid Khan was not

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in pressing necessity, and perhaps on the return journey, having, by the help of Allah, disposed of his enemy, he would naturally want to commemorate the occasion by giving a feast to his village. If he had his usual good fortune this would coincide with the return of the bunia with a few fat bags of rupees. Truly the ways of Allah were great !

So for many days Hamid Khan travelled in peace through the hills, and down through the boulder-strewn passes where a blade of grass is as rare as water in the desert. Eventually he arrived in India, the goal of his undertaking. " I will eat now," spoke the Frontierman to himself, when he eventually sat in the Bazaar at Peshawar, " for I have the feeling of emptiness which does not make for comfort." Swarthy hillmen strode through the Bazaar chewing dried figs and buying mulberries all the way from Afghanistan. Here and there dreamy-eyed Usebeks in long felt boots and fur hats as worn in far-off Turkestan wended their way through the crowds. Everyone parted readily with his money in this land of plenty.

As he sat eating rice cooked in Pathan fashion, some old comrades of past lurid exploits passed near him on their way through the Bazaar. They would have welcomed an exchange of confidences with their old friend, but one look from him intimated that it was not an auspicious moment to renew acquaintanceship, and no further recognition took place. Well they knew they would hear the story in the near future in the peace and hospitality of their own hills, where there was no danger attached to the asking of questions. Having eaten, Hamid Khan rose to his feet. " Now will I proceed to the dwelling of the Ferungie, which will be of a situation greatly different to that of the men of Hindustan whom the Englees have conquered these many

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A STREET SCENE IN MECCA

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years." Hamid Khan laughed the care-free laugh of a hillman. Everything was going even better than he had expected, for it was always that he could choose his destination.

He left the Bazaar and made his way through the city to the Military Cantonment. " Of a surety these Ferungies well know the ways of comfort and pleasure," he remarked to himself as he approached a large bungalow. " They have taken soft ways much to the heart." Just at that crucial moment further ruminations were cut short by the approach of two military policemen, who came towards him in anything but a friendly manner. " What are you doing here," one asked him in the native language. " Yesterday we thought we had rounded up every Pathan within a radius of ten miles after they raided the Bazaar the night before, and if here isn't one at large under our very noses." " I know nothing of what you speak," replied Hamid, " I am but a poor trader, whose only desire is to sell a few rugs to the Sahibs in the bungalows here and then return home." " Not on your life," said one of the white policemen, at which both laughed. " Hand over the old blunderbus and come with us." Obediently Hamid Khan handed over his stick. His wrists were handcuffed and as he marched along the baking road between his captors his heart sank. Was this then to be the end of the opportunity just as success had presented itself, thought he. A few moments more saw him inside the cell of a wayside prison. The door clanged behind him and his activities so far as the outside world was concerned, were finished. He gazed longingly at the bungalows from the iron-barred window. " Fool that I was not to wait until nightfall, for the darkness hath ever been a good friend to me. It is well that I mentioned not this plan of mine to the village folk, for their

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jokes would have brought the taste of bitterness to this mouth of mine ! "

His captors, two officious-looking English soldiers, kept inside the shady veranda opposite, while the sun shone straight through the barred window of the prison cell. " Of what do these Ferungies talk ? " wondered the captive, as the policemen laughed loudly. " Would that positions were changed and that these captors were at my mercy in mine own hills. Laugh they might, but it would only be if they enjoyed my hospitality ! " The thought of how he would like to entertain the guards under the changed circumstances was too much for Hamid Khan, he forgot his predicament and laughed with vigour. " Lummy ! " ejaculated one of the policemen in true soldier's jargon, " Is he balmy ? " Then turning to his companion he said, " You bet he feels the heat as bad as we do." And here he broke the rules of the prison by handing a cigarette to the Pathan.

That night there was no sleep for the prisoner in the hot discomfort of the narrow cell, and day brought the merciless heat of the sun, which at noon shone once more on the prisoner. " Allah-ho-akbar," cried the Pathan as he lay on the floor, minus coat, shoes and turban. Just then some Army officers came and looked in at him. A long conversation took place between them and the guards, and when the officers rode away one of the policemen spoke to the prisoner at the grating. " You are to get out to-morrow, Miller Sahib says so, and you had better beat it after that, old lad, or you might have a dusty time if we catch you again." But the last sentence was lost on Hamid Khan. All the gathered vengeance of the last two years rose before him. In an instant he was on his feet, the lethargy gone, the heat forgotten. Although he was in the grip of rage and great excitement his voice showed no

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emotion as he said, "This Miller Sahib must be a great soldier when a word of his can excuse a prisoner who sees no way of escape." "Yes," came the reply, on every word of which the frontiersman hung, "he is in the Frontier Rifles, that is his bungalow over there with the wall round it. He used to know your God-forsaken part of the country well." "Ah!" the ejaculation was a mixture of relief and returned hope. "Miller Sahib of the Frontier Rifles!" "The murderer of my brother Habeeb Khan!" thought the hillman. It is well to have suffered so to have the prey delivered into mine hands! Allah-ho-Akbar! Never had the Pathan uttered the words with such reverence, or so great a belief in their truth.

That night there was little sleep for Hamid Khan, for the excitement after the agony and disappointment of the last few days was as new life to the man. The discomfort was forgotten; nothing but to-morrow's freedom and what it meant was in his mind. Next day he was free and lost no time in getting to the bungalow of Captain Miller. Entering the compound he went to the kitchen quarters. "Salaam-alaikum" (Peace be on you), he said to the cook. "Does your master require such poor services as I can offer?" "The Sahib is away," replied the cook. "He has much work of great importance to do, and will not return until to-night, when he has a burra khana (dinner party), but he requires a chowkidar (night-watchman) and if it is not too long for you to wait, I think you can be sure of the job. The Sahib has much money and gives good pay." "I will wait," replied Hamid Khan, who thought that a few hours were as nothing compared to the last two years.

That night saw him in his new role of chowkidar to the Englishman. The rest was only the matter of a few hours. Many times he walked round the bungalow, as was his

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duty. The dinner party was in full swing, and the Captain had just given him some orders, adding that if a message came for him during the night it would be important and was to be given to him at once. The Sahib would be retiring soon, thought Hamid Khan, and I shall rest for an hour, for the last few nights have unnerved me, and I would have a steady hand, for to-night calls for one.

He awoke some time later with a start. "Fool that I am," murmured the frontiersman, "how long have I slept, and what is the hour? Lucky it is that it is still dark." A clock struck the hour of 2 a.m. All was silent. Even the seemingly tireless jackals held their peace. "The hour is come!" muttered Hamid Khan. "Strength to my sword arm! Now will I challenge and slay the Ferungie ere cock crow, and the father of the man who will capture Hamid Khan under circumstances so auspicious has yet to learn the art of walking!" Slipping off his sandals, the Pathan made his way noiselessly along the veranda to the Captain's bedroom. The night was hot and the glass-door had been left open as is the custom. It was the work of a few seconds to slip aside the grass chick (blind) and creep into the bedroom. The frontiersman found himself in a large room, in which a dim light showed in a distant corner. Drawing his long Afghan blade he approached the bed. "Son of a dog!" he said in a gruff whisper, "behold in me Hamid Khan, the avenger of my brother Habeeb Khan! Arise, murderer! and strike thy tulwar on mine, for either thou or I shalt die! Sit up, for I kill not any man while he lies asleep!" There was no sound from the bed and Hamid repeated the challenge. As he said the last words a form rose in the bed, and to his amazement Hamid Khan saw the figure of a woman. He drew back. "A woman!" he cried, "Do mine eyes behold a woman? What is this?

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Art thou a ghost? an afrit? Speak!" "I am no ghost," came the reply in steady tones, "I am a woman." "Where is the Captain?" "I do not know." Again the reply showed no sign of fear. Terror seized the hillman. There was something mysterious in the situation. Perhaps Allah in his desire to save the life of the Englishman had changed him to woman's form. "It cannot be that these eyes of mine play me false," reasoned the Pathan. Terrified at what other mystery might overtake him in this land of unreality, he dashed from the bungalow and out into the darkness. Hamid Khan whose name for bravery was known on all the broad Frontier, frightened by a woman! He hastened on, and dawn saw him well on his way out of the land of the unbelievers.

Eight days later he arrived home to find the place almost in ruins. Huge branches from the mulberry trees were strewn in confusion everywhere, great dark stains on the ground showed more clearly than any words could have done, what had happened. The thatched roofs had been burned, and the watch-tower was dismantled. The unaccustomed silence sent a shudder of fear through the heart of the Pathan, fear as to the safety of his aged father. He hurried to his home, where he found his father alive but suffering from severe wounds and grief at the death of his youngest son who had been killed in his sight. It appeared that a neighbouring Chief had renewed an old quarrel and taken the village unawares, so that the father and his followers had had more than enough to do to defend themselves. As luck would have it some British soldiers, newly arrived, and stationed only a short distance came to the old man's aid. He continued for long in glowing terms of the bravery of the white soldiers, and especially of the leader, who defended the wounded old man at great peril to his

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own life. The Captain, leader of the soldiers, lay now in hospital so badly wounded that he might not recover. "Long have I spit at the sight of a Ferungie, O my son," spoke his father, "but Allah hath shown me the error of hatred in mine old age, for had we been alone we should surely have been killed in thine absence."

When the old man recovered sufficiently he and Hamid Khan went to the hospital to thank the Englishman for his assistance and to enquire how he was progressing. When they reached the bedside both men were moved to pity, for the man lying there was swathed in bandages and only one eye was visible. He was too weak from loss of blood to talk, and the visitors were asked to leave after a few moments. The next time they went to the hospital the patient had improved, and talking was allowed. During the conversation the Captain said that when he felt he was dying an incident hung heavily on his conscience, and that he would now like to ease his mind by relating it to the visitors.

Haltingly and with difficulty the Captain told of how he had accidently shot one of their countrymen. Two years ago he had employed a Pathan as night-watchman. One night returning from the Club, where he had had too much to drink, he found the chowkidar asleep, instead of attending to his duties. He called the man a pig, the worst insult on a Pathan, and the punishment for which by Hill-law is death. But the Pathan having eaten the salt of the Captain gave the latter the chance to take back his words. The Englishman was not in his right senses and repeated the insult. The chowkidar snatched his knife and rushed at the captain, who drew his revolver in self-defence. The two closed and struggled. The revolver went off, and the Pathan rolled to the ground. He was dead. Silence

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reigned in the whitewashed ward of the little hospital. Hamid Khan stroked his beard. "And the name of the chowkidar?" he demanded with emphasis on every word. "Habeeb Khan," came the reply. "Knowest thou that he was mine own brother and dearer to me than my right hand. Dost thou know that I have carried hatred for thee in mine heart for two years until like a burning fire it consumed me and the only ease mine spirit knew was the plan I made to destroy thee. It was to carry out this that I braved the perils and travelled into the land of Hindustan to crush the life out of thee with these hands of mine. For the hate I bore thee was as great as the love I had for mine own brother. With difficulty I reached Peshawar and obtained work as a chowkidar in thy service. That night thou told me of the urgent message I know now that thou wert called away here. But I knew it not then, and made my way to thy room to kill thee, and so avenge my brother. On reaching thy room I was afraid when a woman appeared, when I expected only thee, and I thought that Allah saw fit to preserve thy life by changing thee to the form of a woman. I fled, for a Pathan does not kill women." The brigand's voice rose in anger again and again as he related the story of his hatred. Now, placing his head between both hands, he said, "Thanks be to Allah that thy life was spared and for thy noble defence of my old father who is more dear to me than anything on this earth. My affection for him is greater than my hate for thee. Thus by saving him thou hast paid the debt. Take this turquoise ring from my finger, and if ever thou shouldst be in danger from any of my clansmen show it, and it will assure thee passage in safety where no white man dare go. In this wise I prove to thee that instead of the great hate I bore thee, gratitude only remains in the heart of Hamid Khan."

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CHAPTER X

INDIA: AS A WANDERER SEES IT

THE tropical sun was beating upon the tall palm trees that skirt Chowpati in Bombay on the day of which I speak. None reposed under the shady groves there, not a single motor-car was on the road, no gaudily dressed Parsee children played on the beach. The barrows of the cool-drink sellers and the booths of the beetle-nut vendors were missing too ; only the greenish giant waves of incoming tide dashed on the lonely shore. This surely is the epitome of the true Oriental placidity, thought I, and wondered whether it could be true of Bombay, which on account of its seething population and commercial life is casting off the Eastern serenity for European industrialism in the manner that a pupil outstrips the teacher.

Not being able to reconcile this dismal inactivity with the normal life of that great Indian city, I soon discovered that Bombay on that particular day was in the throes of an armed conflict between the Hindoos and Moslems. Half of the population was engaged in splitting each other's heads with nothing stronger than big sticks, and the other half, having put up the shutters of their shops, had locked themselves in their homes, or had left for the interior of the country for the safety of their lives. The principal streets were barricaded, all important buildings were encircled by barbed wire entanglements, British soldiers guarded the

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approaches of the thoroughfares, the ordinary life of the city was at a standstill.

Every now and then armed cars full of soldiers rushed to the scenes of fights where a Pathan might have been beaten to death by an infuriated factory mob or somebody's shop was looted by the warring communities. Standing on the Ridge you could see the two sides of the picture of Bombay of that day : the deserted vistas of the fashionable promenade on one side, and on the other the lanes and dark alleys of the native quarters full of yelling, jeering crowds that reminded you of the French Revolution.

Within a very few hours after experiencing this rioting in Bombay, I was approaching the Ashram, or the Retreat of Mahatma Gandhi, near Ahmedabad in Western India. The placid waters of the holy Samatau flowed noiselessly by an unpretentious whitewashed building. Crows were cawing in the peepal trees, and in the courtyard the political sage of India—Gandhi—sat on a reed mat. A loin cloth was all that covered his body. Stricken with admiration, a few Hindoos sat around him, others with high caste marks on their foreheads, were engaged in their Puja at a nearby shrine ; and a few students of his university stepped in. Touching their foreheads with folded hands these youths squatted down in a far corner. All, mute and reverential, sat gazing at the man who had inspired them with a new sense of philosophy. The news of the Bombay riots had reached the Mahatma, and as violence is against his creed, he was fasting that day as a protest for what his countrymen were doing less than two hundred miles away from him.

Now that is the complex of the man. Ever since 1919 when he first preached his gospel of Non-violent Non-

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co-operation, and practically brought the Government in 1921 to the verge of great uneasiness, never has there been a single instance when his followers had desisted from using force. The point is worthy of very great consideration. Here is a man whose words are passionate yet wise, his political philosophy is unquestionably interesting, he bears no ill-will towards the British race as such, he preaches and practises non-violence, abhors all display of physical manifestations to the extent that he actually does penance for such occurrences ; and yet India has never been free from actual riots and disturbances since he has come upon the scene. It is just this enigmatic situation which few Western observers have been able to explain about this the most extraordinary man of our times. I shall attempt to reveal its real meaning, for one Oriental can often peep into the heart of another son of Asia perhaps more successfully than Europeans can.

Gandhi is a visionary, as full of visions as a poet whose woods and seas lie in the far kingdoms of a hundred centuries. The roots of his ideas are embedded in the soil which has been washed away by the holy Ganges many years before he was born. He distrusts modern forms of democracy in all its expressions. He wants his countrymen to hark back to the days of the Vedas and the time of the legend of the "flying-carriage" that took the ape god to Ceylon from Upper India on his world conquest. In short he wishes to divorce modern world conditions entirely. He has filled his mind with the ideals of the past so completely that to the ordinary imagination they appear incomprehensible ; one is almost tempted to say that he has lost touch with all affairs of to-day.

He forgets that India of our age and whatever national feeling she possesses is due to the British connection ; for

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even the originator of the Congress was an Englishman. Such giants of Indian politics as Gokhail and Sir Syed Ahmed Khan acknowledged the benefits of the British connection ; and without the grants of Minto-Morley Reforms, even of the latest scheme of the late Mr. Montague, could India have been set on her path of self-government ? Was it an Indian, or the very conservative Britisher—Ramsay Muir, who questions his countrymen frequently in his book, *The Expansion of Europe*, by such observations as : " whether the spirit in which this world-supremacy of Europe was to be wielded should be spirit of trusteeship on behalf of civilization ; or whether it was to be the old, brutal and sterile spirit of mere domination " ?

But returning to the study of the Mahatma. How far a personality influences or creates a situation in politics is always worthy of consideration ; for when a departure in the usual affairs of men occurs in any country searching eyes seek the spark that sets it all ablaze. How far did Cromwell influence the Great Rebellion ? had France remained the same had Danton not been hanged ? had Russia continued to be ridden by the Czarist thraldom had Lenin not lived ?

History attests that great minds make an opportunity, the lesser ones only arise to avail themselves of an uprising. Of the latter class is Gandhi, for it is a moot point that it was the harsh treatment of Turkey by Mr. Lloyd George's Government which created a catastrophe in Asia, and threw the entire Moslem India into the arms of agitating Hindoos ; otherwise, since 1887, when that great Moslem Reformist, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, had openly declared the loyalty of his co-religionists to the British Raj, which later was emphasized by his Highness the Agha Khan on starting the Moslem League in 1906, the Moslems of India had

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never fallen in the Hindoo political snare, but just that crusader's impulse which coloured the vision of the Welsh politician precipitately broke the spell after the War and gave Gandhi his opportunity.

Now conditions are different ; Moslems and Hindoos have had opportunity of knowing the assets of an orderly march towards nationalism in the British sense. In the world-economics too, India has been moving for a few generations ; and the point that Gandhi is losing all along is due to the fact that the present political mentality of his country, modelled as it is on the British line, would not go back. It is just that reason which can be given for disturbances in India. The consequence is that wiser men in Hindustan have awakened to the truth that innocent and admirable as the Mahatma's philosophy may be, it nevertheless is not definitely for India of our day.

It has also been discovered that it is necessary to stick to near things rather than to leap up to high rocks of British constitution worn smooth by the political growth of many centuries. And reviewing these facts of conflicting forces, that is the advancing and going back movements, with which the divergence of Indian creeds, language, even economic considerations, are to be added, I feel that the solution lies far beyond the powers of Gandhi, however saintly his outlook might be. Gaining a dignified political status by sane efforts, which the British public has promised to India, is constantly possible, whereas his " march to the sea " to defy the law and thereby make an Independent India instantly actual, is a plan which even the greatest of all political thinkers cannot bring about : and the proof of this you see in his utter failure as a leader of twentieth century India : or at least leader of the saner elements there.

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A Conflict of Cultures in India.

But there are other reasons for Indian agitation, beyond what has been said above. What is there really wrong with India ? I claim to be able to answer that almost in a single sentence. The root of the matter is that she is in a condition of bewilderment between an Eastern and a Western civilization. She is a nation on the horns of a cultural dilemma.

You may say that she is a nation in revolt, and that the agitation she is manifesting is dangerous to the British Empire : which is undeniably true, but it must be borne in mind that the conditions of which you speak are traceable almost entirely to the European doctrines she has imbibed. If India is in revolt, she is in revolt on European lines.

The Indian has been so entirely altered by Occidentalism that, mentally and physically speaking, he is scarcely an Indian any longer. He was formerly an Asiatic with an Asiatic mentality and outlook, but centuries of wholesome British administration and missionary effort have gradually made him a semi-European, and have endowed him with all the faults and failings of European psychology ; of their virtues he has imbibed but little.

It stands to reason that the outlook most suitable for the development of a race is that which it has excogitated in its own particular environment. That is an axiom which can scarcely be gainsaid. The British have developed along lines which they have found by experience to be valuable to themselves in their own particular atmosphere. How, then, can they expect anything but failure and confusion to arise out of an endeavour " to run " India on British lines ?

An Indian, for an instance, is educated in English style ; he is taught to read Macaulay and Shakespeare in place of his own native Sanskrit literature ; he imbibes European history rather than that of his own country.

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The entire fabric of the Indian past is practically unknown to him, he has no mental roots in it. He sees India through European eyes, but naturally reasons regarding it in his own manner. Therefore he is the victim of a hybrid culture. If he be an intelligent man the folly of the position grows gradually evident to him, and he becomes disillusioned and disgruntled. The system is merely turning the better-class Indians into a race of semi-educated clerks. Marks in Service examinations is their goal rather than the acquiring of true culture.

Another innovation is the institution of representative government in India on Western lines. When you consider that 95 per cent. of the Indians are agriculturists, who are illiterate and concern themselves only with what the land can yield, it might be asked whether the members of the Indian Parliaments do really represent such masses. What actually is the case is that the townspeople, who have been educated in the wrong sense, are taking to politics and are supposed to guide the peasants ; but the men of the plough care very little about active politics, and care less about the Reforms. They do not agitate, and all their thoughts are centred around their crops. They sincerely wish to be left alone.

A complete contrast to this Gandhi's revolting agitation is to be found even in India. I refer to about eighty million people subject to the Indian Princes, where this venom of agitation is not permitted to trickle. The Maharajas who govern their States, an area of over seven hundred thousand square miles, realizing the limitations of their countrymen, are prepared to evolve a slower march towards realization of self-government, which the Swarajists want to-day ; with the result that peace prevails in Indian India, so to speak, whereas the British territory is in the throes

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of strife and struggle. Fortunately this important force for good of the Indian Potentates has once again come to the rescue of law and order in that country, as they did during the Great War, by having brought their entire support to bear upon the present disquiet in Hindustan by standing aloof from the Babu agitator, and advising practically all minorities to desist from following the path which is un-Indian, with the consequence that India is not set ablaze to the extent for which the followers of Gandhi hoped. Nothing shows more clearly than the present disturbances in India, the utmost importance of appreciating that a future constitution in India should grow on indigenous ground from a native seed, for it can thrive only if there is no conflict of cultures which marks the scenes in that country to-day.

Meanwhile, more riots, strikes and head-splitting goes on on all sides in India to the extent that during one year 506,851 men were involved in the struggle, losing 31,647,404 working days, and during one strike alone in Bombay they lost £21,347,620. And still the agitator shouts, Down with the British thraldom! and the white soldier still stands in the midst of the struggle while Gandhi sadly looks on the smouldering ruins of his country. And the Simon Commission flitted from town to town in search of a remedy for India's ills.

The knowledge of these facts saddened me as deep in thought I continued to stir my tea, and my gaze floated over the waters of the Back Bay in Bombay till my Indian friend pensively remarked that only a giant statesman, a super-man in politics, would save India at this moment. He saw the prospect of none such coming forth. Almost involuntarily I looked round at the distinguished guests gathered at that hillside terrace tea-party, and having

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surveyed the assembly I remarked that India had at least one man who can stave off the catastrophe. He looked round too. His eyes alighted on a thick-set man wearing smoked glasses as he stood surrounded by be-turbaned Ismailiah adherents of his. He moved about with that easy grace which bespoke of the real culture of old Persia. He was talking slowly, almost weighing every syllable as he spoke in that true fashion of spiritual leadership which has singled him out from other outstanding Eastern personalities. "Prince Agha Khan, you mean?" asked my friend.

Yes, indeed, His Highness Agha Khan, or to give him his full name, Agha Sultan Mohamed Shah, born of Persian parents and claiming India as his adopted country, commanding the ready adhesion of millions of Mohamedans from Bokhara to South Africa, is the man of the hour for the salvation of India. Unlike Gandhi or Lenin he is not a "mass-man," but rather the spokesman of the Moslem intellegencia whose voice counts throughout the length and breadth of the Indian continent. Quite apart from the fact that he is regarded as the highest spiritual authority with the men of his sect, he is held in utmost esteem by all, due to his cardinal policy of give and take between the communities.

When he advocated a rapprochement between the Hindoos and the Moslems with due regard to each other's responsibilities and rights, and after a union of hearts on that basis, he exhorted them to approach the British Government through peaceful negotiations. In this regard he differed radically from the Gandhi-mind and had the key of the whole situation in his hands. His slogan has always been: "Indians! prepare yourselves for government, and you then shall have autonomy without asking

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INTERIOR OF THE GREAT MOSQUE AT MECCA, AND THE SHRINE OF THE SACRED BLACK STONE IN THE DISTANCE

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for it." And thereby he meant the prevalence of a more tolerant attitude between the Indian communities and above all the dissemination of a higher standard of education. Few people know that many years ago he made a noble effort to raise funds for the Moslem University of Aligarh, and on that account travelled very extensively throughout India. Having discovered the power of education, he had ever been at pains to instil the necessity of it in the minds of his countrymen.

Knowing also the weaknesses of illiteracy that gnawed in the soul of India he had predicted the collapse of the education set up by Gandhi, and had never envisaged a destructive programme. During and after the War his work for peace never marked time, his name was recommended for the Nobel Peace Prize ; and his voice had considerable force in influencing lenient terms for Turkey.

But although the wisdom of his pacifist policy had rarely ever lost its glow, yet it is undeniable that the political dust-storm created by the imbecilic anti-British agitation had obscured it, till with the sobering down of public opinion there, when the false Indian political prophets finding themselves idle at home had to dabble in Afghan affairs, Agha Khan's sagacious policy emerged more radiantly than before as the only constructive line of action for India to-day. Appreciation of this was clearly shown by his presiding at an All-India Moslem Conference recently, also by the creation of a very powerful permanent organization there only a little while ago under his leadership, laying down a policy whereby a working arrangement could be established with both the British and the Hindoos through peaceful means.

" Progress is possible," he says, " only through reconciliation." He practises what he preaches, as the whole

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tenor of his life's work shows ; and his movement cannot but be welcomed by all well-wishers of the British Empire. In this country as in France H.H. Agha Khan is known as a great sportsman, one devoted to horses ; but those who know him best find him wrapped in a singular degree of spirituality. Yes, indeed, he is a Prince of Peace, and in that sense he is little less than a super-man. And at this juncture India can be saved by nothing less than a super-man.

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CHAPTER XI

JUNGLE NIGHTS

SICKENED with politics and more politics, one goes to the innocence of nature in the Indian jungles. It begins with the Shikari sitting on his haunches confidingly whispering to you of the wild boar in the long grass, or the new impresses of a tiger that he had just seen up the hill, and the huge coveys of ducks that flew past his village in the gloaming. Then your double fly tent, poles, pegs and ropes securely packed on a mule, follow a bullock cart full of folding beds, chairs and matting, which your cook-valet is holding in position, sitting on the top of all as the great wheels go bumping over the road one crisp, chilly morning. You yourself start after the day's work.

It is already past afternoon tea-hour when you rise from your table, fagged, tired out, and longing for a holiday, and your thoughts go to England and Scotland where somewhere lies your home full of memories of your childhood days. The scenes of your early days pass before your mind's eye like a swiftly-moving cinema film, now dimmed by time, and much of the picture is fading in the toil under a foreign sky, till the cawing of the crows, and the babble of human tongues wake you from your reverie.

You must go to the jungle and enjoy Easter holidays there. You might be lonely, but never alone : " Boy ! " you yell, and from nowhere, as it were, appears a bronze

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complexioned youth, who depositing your tea-tray before you, also places beside you your riding kit, item by item, and is gone as stealthily as a tiger.

The gold of the setting sun is already paling over the mango tree-tops as you gallop along dusty roads and dry nullahs, between tall deodars and dwarfed acacia trees, and find yourself nowhere near your camp. Surely the tortoise has beaten the hare, for the bullock cart which had left with your camp in the morning had travelled quicker than you expected. Hard you ride on, crossing the holy Ganges by ferry boat, and lo ! night has fallen and your camp might be on the other side of the earth for all you know. Reed bushes of the river bank terminate in bog, and beyond it rise lordly Saal trees down the slope of yonder hillock. It grows distinctly cold. The din of the jungle cricket drowns the sound of your pony rushing through the undergrowth, and yet no camp appears in sight. Would it not be just here that your Shikari had seen the tiger or the jungle python swing between the branches and the snorting herd of wild pig ? And you had sent your rifle ahead of you. Anon your mount leaps forward, puffs and blows and shivers in nervousness. Here, sure enough, is some beast lurking in the thicket—then you believe in the jungle sense of horses. There is some danger ahead. A cold perspiration breaks over you, for an unarmed man is no match for a wild animal, especially at night, in a jungle. Tense moments of excitement at last pass ; it was only a creeper which entangled the feet of the pony and nothing more. Then a long sonorous voice strikes upon your ears, and presently a search party led by the Shikari guides you to your camp.

Early the next morning finds you hiding in your butt on the edge of a lake, and a dozen or more swarthy coolies,

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wading through the rush grass into the water, drive the ducks. First come the geese, beating their great wings in the cool morning air. You fire once or twice, and yelling, shouting coolies run to get the prey. They come within the range of the gun, swimming behind the dodging, wounded bird. "Get off the range, you fools!" you shout, without avail. They are past obeying orders in the excitement of the chase. Then comes a batch of teels, and red heads and others, and bang! bang! spits your twelve-bore. This continues for a couple of hours till the place is littered with empty cartridges and with as many birds. They carry the day's bag tied in bundles, or in nets, either on their heads or on poles. And then comes the time for buksheesh, fourpence for each beater. They sit smoking their pipes of peace and pass it on from man to man as you discuss the next day's ride to the nullah where the tiger had killed a goat.

Rustling wind it was that made that noise, or was it indeed the king of the jungle itself who came to look at the carcase beside the pool where you hid yourself on a tree. The moonlight is waning, your Shikari is all eyes, the tiger might appear at any moment, and yet the Sahib snores, his face on the butt of his rifle. "Wake up, Sahib, wake up!" he nudges you. "Shair ata Hay" (the tiger is coming). Two eyes glare through the dim light, "spots" is here, he crouches and plays, the trigger is pressed and a thundering noise mingled with a deafening roar and tearing of bushes below. "It is dead, Sahib; congratulations, Salam Sahib Buksheesh!" says the Shikari, and your holiday celebrations have attained their zenith, for you have vanquished the king of beasts.

In the meantime other members of his clan besport themselves elsewhere in the Himalayan passes. Their games beside a pool have a fascination of their own.

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Tigers at Home.

Long grass and hefty deodars choke the moist air. A thicket here, another there, weaves a tracery of clinging creepers ; and in a little clearing here shadows play with the concentrated light of the sun. Mosquitoes have struck their blood-dance amongst the interlacing bows, the jungle fly darts about, and a silence.

Then the knitted vegetation sways, a face half-hidden by the sword-blade grass shyly surveys the scene. Larger than a round boudoir table-top, it moves forward, two glittering, fire-laden eyes gleaming, whiskers moving : and slightly, ever so slightly twitching its supercilious eyebrows, the face is now quite clear. A mass of gold and black stripes, blithely, stealthily, the king of the jungle arrives beside the drinking-pool.

Close upon his heels, another giant, and another lesser one ; and then two frolicsome bundles of stripes tearing past the elder tigers trundle towards their father in the checkered shade of the clearing.

The three and the two cubs are of one household ; the young ones are no respecters of peace. Jumping, leaping at each other, gurgling their throats, they tumble over and on. Their fond mother eyes them admiringly, and rolls over her side to see how her lord is taking it. He lifts and lays down his tail and looks away as if not interested.

The eldest child, a cub of two and a half, shows better manners, but even his steady and awful gaze fails to make any effect upon the youngsters ; like his parents, he too rolls over his shoulders.

Soon the little ones tire and lie snoozing. There was a living picture of glorious profiles ; for even in their half-sleeping postures they look grave yet vividly alive. The mother was deep in thought, only a little light shone in her

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partially closed eyes. Their lord was not half enough in dreams. He moved his whiskers a little now, a little then.

The elder cub then sat up on his haunches, intently gazing at a maddened wasp buzzing around. He held up his paw, and as the wailing insect was swallowed up in the deep shadows of the jungle, the young tiger's paw busied itself in massaging his stripes of deepening black. He liked the pad, and massaged again.

The tigress now opened her shimmering eyes ; fixing upon her eldest child, she growled just a little ; but soon let her massive head rest on the ground, half snarling. The biggest beast woke with a start, his eyes flaming, and began to wash his shoulders. Twice he let his jaws sink into his stripes, then he rose with a swaggering gait, and paced down to the pool. It mirrored his face.

In his lapping he stopped. He looked back. It was only those two junior members of his family, who, having been relieved awhile by paternal severity, had got up, and now bit and jumped over their mother. The mouth of the tigress opened and closed with a mute yapping, her tail moved up and down.

An hour later there was a rustle amongst the grass. It grew stronger. The tiger family gathered up their wits. They were all eyes and ears. The wind was rising, troops of massive rain-laden clouds raced over the heads of the lofty deodars. Distant rumbling of thunder echoed and re-echoed in the valley below. Drops of rain started a thin music upon the leaves.

The tigers roused themselves, their variegated skins moving, the male stepped forward, then the rest. Grass and thicket mass parted swiftly, the pocket of the jungle was empty ; for the monsoon rain was falling in torrents, and the tiger family rested under the shoulder of yonder rock up the hill.

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Even the greatest of all animal lovers, and big game hunters, cannot often put up with much of that oppression of heat that makes life unbearable on the plains after May ; for the heat waves bounced and floated on the bare fields on the Indian jungle fringes. I yearned for the hill-tops.

To the Indian Hill-tops.

In the sweltering, choking heat I was tossing restlessly on my bed. Sleep was out of the question, but it was an advantage to get away from the hungry mosquitoes. The tree crickets were chirruping harshly, unceasingly. The monkeys chattered away in the branches unseen but all-seeing, while the full force of jungle insects appeared to be dancing a sailor's hornpipe round the fascinating light of the candle, until with scorched wings they dropped one by one.

All of a sudden there was silence. There might have been a pact between the monkeys and the crickets. Suddenly, unexpectedly, there was a breath of air, then there was a gust, another, which was caught up by my mosquito net and wafted to me. Now a rumbling sound in the distance ; I rushed to the door and looked to where only a short time before there was only a grey and golden haze ; it was now shading into a darker mass, which increased with the repeated rising of the wind. While I stand there huge black masses like troops of giants romping and fighting moved on and upwards to the Himalayan heights, lashed from behind by vivid tongues of lightning. The thunder rumbles, echoes and re-echoes in the valleys choked with vegetation, as if throwing up the angry cries of the quarrelling giants as they meet and clash together far above in battle. Now a drop or two of rain on the tin roof. Now a sharp shower. The monsoon has burst !

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A VIEW OF TIBIRIOUS IN PALESTINE

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In less than fifteen minutes little rivulets race each other down the hill-sides and when morning dawns the deodar trees are a gleaming mass of starry raindrops, glistening and quivering under the morning sun, which comes out as suddenly as it disappears. But the powdery dust which lay on the roads like slate-coloured flour is gone. The roads are washed clean. Every tin roof sparkles, and I can hear again the hoofs of the hill ponies hit hard as they pass along the stony road. The monkeys and their babies, driven reluctantly to seek shelter in my veranda, scamper gleefully away to their favourite haunts again and take up their noisy chatter as before. The rickshaw coolies appear like mushrooms and race their memsahibs along the shining tracts of roads, and as though the freshness has brought me a new lease of life I trip down the steep winding goat track which leads me to the public road. I drink in the fresh air, intent on making the most of the beauty of it all, and incidentally paying a visit to the library a mile away where I find all the English papers. It will be as well to take a rickshaw in the rear all the same, but the sky is again cloudless and the rain is forgotten. The roads look like new. The bungalow roofs sparkle and the little rivulets have disappeared. The monkeys, alert as ever, are sitting back in their old places on the roofs of the bazaar shops from which point of vantage it is an easy matter to swoop down on the stalls of tempting nuts and fruit, rice and lentils if any of the owners desert them even for a moment to exchange greetings with a fellow stall-holder. The air suddenly becomes cooler again, and a few raindrops splash heavily round me. I am glad at the thought of a " man drawn carriage " as they call it there, and jumping in gave the order " juldee jao " (go quickly) to the men. Needing no second reminder they race at

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top speed over the remaining part of the road, and reach just in time to get into the library when the storm bursts furiously. From this shelter it is not a little amusing to watch the predicaments of those not so favourably placed as myself.

Several coolies, bare-legged, bearing large baskets on their heads, out of which one just catches a glimpse of the tops of yellow mangoes, rush to the shelter of the nearest bazaar. The rickshaw coolies awaiting their sahibs and memsahibs wrap their heads in their huge worsted blankets, and, failing any other shelter, creep into their rickshaws ; and just as everybody unfortunate enough to have been at the mercy of the storm is thoroughly drenched, out comes the sun again.

The Indian farmer idles the time away under the thick foliage of the mango groves. The social round is slightly eased, and one sees more of one's bungalow than is generally the case in the midst of the " season." Sunshine and rain play hide-and-seek with each other in that summer capital of India for about three months, during which time the Greek and Italian café-keepers, with eyes no doubt on a speedy return to their own more favoured lands, reap a harvest. *Thé dansant* restaurants, too, are patronized well enough to establish permanent smiles on the glossy faces of their owners. The few picture houses are always popular, and altogether it is an ill rain that damps everybody's spirits in monsoon time in Simla.

At the Marriage Market in the Wild Glens.

In spite of my ruffled feelings, the quiet and beauty of that glen away up in the Central Himalayas calmed me. For a few moments I forgot my laggard helper in contemplation of the freshness and ethereal beauty of it all. The

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blue mist was rising—or was it falling? Those hills hold for ever their spell over the valley, for have not the Hindu gods, good and evil, cast their enchantment over them? The tinkling of pack ponies brought me back to reality and my shikari to my side. The sight of the old hunter surprised me, for instead of the usual khaki coat and trousers and dirty puttees, which to all outward appearances had followed many a hunt to many a kill, he was literally robed in splendour. I wondered for a moment whether some of these Hindu gods had not cast a spell over me, for his turban was of rainbow stripes, coat of emerald green lavishly bedizened with gold braid and his trousers as spotless as the snow. He saluted and a broad grin spread over his face. "To-day, Sahib," he said, "I cannot accompany your Honour. I am taking my only daughter to the Glen Fair in the hope that she might make a good match."

The shikar (hunt) for me was over. I contented myself in my veranda chair with my books and papers. Anon from away in the distance on all sides came sounds. Nearer they came, mingled with happy voices and laughter. Every goat-track on the slopes of the ridges teemed with people in bright colours, all making towards the Glen Fair. I felt the only being left out of it, and as there would be nothing else to do that day I too decided to take the road to the Fair.

Slipping down the hill I joined the throng. On reaching my destination, a high terraced hill, rising out of a cluster of deodar and brick trees, I found the wood alive with humanity, noise and bustle. Any and every instrument that would make a noise was working overtime. In one corner of the slope terraces had been cut, barricaded by rustic logs, whereon sat the eligible maids of the hills. Many of them were strikingly beautiful—as striking as their festive garments. They wore an indescribable variety of

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clothing, both in colour and style, but the predominating dress was the tight-fitting trousers, three-quarter silk jumper, embroidered waistcoat, and their veil artistically embroidered and lace trimmed and thrown over the head and back over the left shoulder. This allowed the drapery to fall gracefully at the back in a V shape and left the face uncovered, lending a glamour to the imagination and adding to the charm of the girls. No doubt they worked havoc with the affections of the youths gathered round and who were the Lotharios of the day.

Their jewellery was in gold and silver. All the maids wore ear-rings while the married women wore nose-rings or star ornaments as well. I saw a very pretty woman outside the enclosure wearing at least five nose-rings, and was told that the number of rings meant a corresponding number of past husbands. Their bracelets were of great weight and must have been uncomfortable both from the weight and number worn.

Outside the enclosure sat the fathers and relatives of the brides-to-be—ready to discuss with prospective husbands the question of dowry. The young men walked round selecting future partners under the watchful eye of the girls' relatives. Truly, if a young man hesitates he is lost, for he is approached by the girl's relatives and politely and in a roundabout way—for undue hurry is vulgar—asked his intentions. The conversation generally begins with salutations on both sides and leads up to the great question.

Next the girl is called, introduced, and the pact is made, including the dowry which the girl will bring and which she may rely upon from her future husband. The two young people find time to exchange conversation and the fiancé buys anything from six to ten pounds of sweetmeats,

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generally dripping with syrup, to place in the Hindu temple, within the precincts of the Fair. Many attractions lure the annas from the happy-hearted and newly-met pair, and hand in hand they do the round of the pleasure stalls.

First they cross the path of a snake charmer, squatting by the side of the track and coiled round by the serpents. His hands are outstretched for the well-earned alms and he drives a good trade. The sweet booths are everywhere, and there is seldom anything left for these vendors to take away. It may be said here that there is little display of the sweets to aid the sale, for they are sold first direct from large tin plates which stand on wooden counters rudely erected. In one corner of the Fair the Hill Chemist, credited with alchemic powers, displays his varied wares in perhaps the most attractive manner. He uses coloured paper bags, crocodiles' teeth, silver paper with gold paper lace. He has cures for everything from a thorn in the finger to total blindness, and his potions for such as lumbago and toothache are the talk of the Hill-side. His weird look and supposed knowledge and powers have given rise to the belief that he is a master of incantation, for he sells small packets of ashes of the black raven and the heart of the jackal to those wives who have lost the spell over their husbands. These expensive remedies, although they may do no good, have never been known to do any harm, and as the newly-met pair pass by his stall, where he sits holding the charm packet, they laugh at him, but he is wise and murmurs : " Well, in any case, I am always here."

The last amusement, by no means the least, is the merry-go-round, and it is here that the majority stay the longest, and eventually part with many happy farewells and wishes for the future. Each party takes his own track

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and many are the backward glances as the newly engaged pairs wend their several ways back to their respective glens. One cannot help rejoicing with these simple, lovable Hill folk, and as I take my way to my bungalow I know that to-morrow at five o'clock sharp I will see the beaming face of my retrograde shikari whose daughter I shall probably hear had good luck at the Marriage Market. Next morning, indeed, the shikari did give me the news of being " parted " from his daughter : but he was insistent on my believing that the arrangement was possible because he had exercised a magical influence upon the young man. It was this auto-suggestion that set me thinking about the truth of magical manifestation in Asia. Some of my information is interesting in this regard.

Eastern Magic.

People in the West can have only a very indefinite idea of the very large part which magic and the supernatural in general play in Eastern life. Indeed it is not too much to say that magic lies behind all the manifestations of life in the East. It is, in fact, part of Oriental life, nor is it possible to think of or to understand existence in the East, in Asiatic countries as it seems to be in England. Its threads are so intertwined with the threads of existence in the East that they have indeed become as warp and woof, absolutely inseparable.

Nor does the Eastern regard the supernatural as does the Englishman, that is to say, he does not look upon it as extraordinary or supernormal, but as entirely normal. This is owing to the fact that he has come to think of it as something within the sphere of human operation, within the world, as it were, and not outside of it. It is indeed much more native to his mentality simply because he is

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greatly closer to nature and its powers than is the European, whose instinctive processes have been overlaid by generations of " progress."

Before I proceed any farther, I think it will simplify matters if I make it clear to the reader what I believe magic to be. It is, indeed, speaking generally, of course, an attempt to force the spirits or powers who share the world with Man into action on his behalf or for his benefit. It differs thus from religion, in which the chief instrument to move the pity or compassion of the gods is supposed to be prayer or supplication. I remember the difference being very forcibly illustrated by an old Brahmin of my acquaintance. " Man cannot expect," he said, " to move the gods by other than supplication ; they are too high, too powerful to be moved otherwise. But those spirits more commonly in touch with man are certainly not important enough to pray to. They are, in reality, the servants of man, or at least of those men who know how to enslave them, and the art of doing so is what we call magic."

I think the science of Magic could scarcely be defined more simply or more accurately. You will observe that I describe it as a science. Well, that is how, in effect, the peoples of the Orient regard it. They believe that certain spells or spoken words uttered in a certain tone of voice with prescribed bodily gestures and the use of symbols and essences will produce a definite effect, will evoke a spirit or dismiss it. If, however, the correct tone of voice or the appropriate gesture is not employed, or if any other of the magical ingredients is missing, failure ensues. From this it is obvious that the outlook of the Eastern magician is a strictly " scientific " one. That is, he believes, just like the European scientist, the chemist or physicist, that certain causes bring about certain effects. In short, he is not

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experimenting, but engaged in what he believes to be an operation of certainty.

There are many schools of magic in the East, but all of these assuredly have drawn their original inspiration from ancient Egypt. This notwithstanding, magic in the East is sharply divided into two codes, the Higher and the Lower. The former may be described as the " official " science of a body of holy and learned men, most of whom are removed from the feverish influences of everyday life and who dwell apart from men as hermits or yogis. The latter have thousands of practitioners, many of whom are to be found in every large city and even in every village, and who are dependent to a large extent on the most unblushing effrontery and charlatanism for the results they obtain. The pity is that Europeans confuse the two and, therefore, do great injustice to the more exalted caste. At the same time it cannot be denied that the systems have points of contact, and that those who practise the lower magic have gleaned certain secrets from the more elevated thought of the higher.

Extraordinary injustice has, I believe, been done to Eastern magic as a whole by European travellers returning from the East. In many cases many such people have not scrupled to relate the most obvious untruths concerning it, either to appear mysterious or for their own self-glorification. Let us take, for example, the outrageous story of the rope-trick which has gained such wide currency in England. According to many Anglo-Indians, they have actually seen a Hindu " sorcerer " throw a rope up into the air, climb up the said rope, and disappear. I can state unhesitatingly that no such " trick " is ever performed or ever has been performed in India, and that the persons who give currency to the idea are perverters of the truth. No Indian master capable

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A SMALL CARAVAN ON THE EDGE OF THE DESERT

GATHERING OF DESERT SHEIKHS FOR THE EVENING MEAL

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of such a performance would for a moment lower himself by exhibiting it in public, and indeed there is no definite record of any trustworthy person or persons ever having witnessed it.

There are, of course, thousands of travelling magicians in India who perform tricks similar to those which may be seen almost any day in London, but these possess much the same kind of apparatus as did, say, Messrs. Maskelyne and Devant. The great bamboo trick, for example, by which a bamboo tree is made to grow before the eyes of astonished beholders, is a comparatively simple one. A pot full of earth is placed on the ground and the magician waves a thin carpet over it. In this carpet are concealed portions of bamboo rod articulated like the parts of a fishing-rod, which fit into each other. These are withdrawn one by one and attached to each other by skilful sleight of hand, so that the tree actually seems to grow and eventually is crowned by a tuft of leaves. The trick, when one knows it, is simplicity itself, and relies entirely upon the dexterity of the performer.

There are, however, some tricks which certainly depend on the ability of the magician to induce collective hallucination in his audience. That is, he probably has the power of hypnotizing the onlookers and making them believe that they see such and such a thing. I remember once beholding such a process in a small village in Bengal. A couple of itinerant magicians drew a small crowd of perhaps fifty people round them in the shabby little market-place, and one announced with much preliminary patter that he was about to consume the other to ashes. Striking a light, he set fire to his fellow, who soon began to blaze merrily. The onlookers stood open-mouthed, and so silent, indeed, that I concluded most of them were in a semi-hypnotic condition. As I gazed my attention was

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suddenly diverted by one of the village dogs, which kept sniffing round my ankles. I turned to kick it out of the road and when once more I looked at the " burning " man there was not a sign of flame about him. Rather amazed at this, I blinked once or twice and continued to gaze more steadily. As I did so I clearly observed the flames enwrap the " victim " once again. Then a thick cloud of smoke enveloped him and when it cleared away nothing was left of him but a heap of cinders. The magician then clapped his hands violently, bellowing and shouting, and the consumed individual once again appeared suddenly in his ordinary shape.

This was plainly a case of collective hypnotic influence. The interruption of my attention by the antics of the dog had obviously broken the spell for the moment.

The numerous cases into which catalepsy enters are, of course, due to entirely different conditions. These are well-founded and well-documented and there is every possible proof for them. They are generally carried out by men who have made a special study of the conditions. Sometimes they are induced by drugs. At others there is not the least sign that this has happened. There are undoubtedly men in India who can cast themselves into a long cataleptic trance, and of course, there is a greater number of others who adopt methods of trickery. I have never myself witnessed the burial of a fakir under conditions of real catalepsy, but I have the word of several people who have actually seen a man of this class interred and dug up again after several weeks. That the thing is actually done and has been done hundreds of times I have not the least doubt, only I would impress upon my readers that for every genuine case of the kind there are probably half a dozen fake cases.

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I remember hearing of one which occurred in the neighbourhood of Benares. A well-known local fakir announced that he would undergo burial for forty days in a small semi-ruined temple. The shrine in question had a flooring of stone slabs and one of these was removed. The fakir, swathed in a shroud, was placed in the grave in a squatting position and the stone was replaced ; but some of his friends had brought a pumpkin full of water, and it was found that this was connected by rubber tubing to the fakir's tomb ! On examination the water proved to have been boiled with rice, a nourishment quite sufficient to keep an ascetic Hindu " going " for several days at a time.

As I have mentioned, drugs enter largely into Indian magic, and some of these are certainly employed to bring about suspended animation. The chewing of opium can keep away the sense of hunger for days, and anyone who has been in Arabia knows that the mixture which the Berber tribes prepare from honey and roasted and bruised corn is so nourishing that a handful of it eaten in the morning will keep away hunger for the whole day. A drug made from the rice of *datura ferox* is commonly used on the west coast of India and has the property of causing a long sleep accompanied by visions. Waking is usually effected by plunging the feet into hot water. Bhang, which is sold secretly in the bazaars of Calcutta, is made from the native hemp plant and is known locally as *ganjah* or *subjee*. The resin which is exuded by the hemp plant is called *churrus* in Nepal, and is collected by naked coolies walking through the hemp fields at the time when the plant exudes the resin, which sticks to their skins, from which it is scraped off and kneaded into balls. It is used by sorcerers of the lower order, who chew it and produce a

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delirium in which they prophesy. The torments which the yogis or penitents impose upon themselves are sometimes said to be borne by the aid of stupefying drugs, yet some of these men actually believe themselves to be invulnerable because of the austerities they have gone through. I remember a case of a yogi of great sanctity who dwelt in a village on the banks of the Ganges, and who actually believed that he was so sacred that the wild beasts of the jungle would come and lick his hand. Full of this conviction he put himself in the path of a tiger with the object of testing his belief. The tiger certainly licked his hand, but went a little further and ended by licking his own chops.

Some of these yogis perform a rite called *pahvadan*, which is by no means as common as it used to be. It consists in the supposed slaying and resuscitation of a human being, which they think will demonstrate their extraordinary sanctity, but it is usually so clumsily performed that it would not impose upon anyone who was not sunk in the deepest superstition. There are, however, many things in Oriental magic which seem to be quite unaccountable. For example, how is one to explain the numerous well-accredited instances of the precipitation of matter which occur in India and other countries in the East? It will be recalled that at the time of the great theosophical controversy much criticism was directed towards the statements of the officials of the Theosophical Society that written messages and even ponderable objects of some considerable size had been precipitated from India to England and America by supernatural means. That is to say, their atoms had been disintegrated in passage and had come together again at the place where they were found.

The officials of the Society were at a loss to justify the process, and in all justice to them it has to be said that

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they made it quite clear that they had no desire to rely for their beliefs on "miracles," but founded them rather on the ethical system which they had received and which they taught. But I think that had they searched in the proper quarters they could have found sufficient proof to justify the seeming miracle of precipitation. For, after all, it is an art of long standing in the East and cannot actually be said to be of the nature of the miraculous. Western science is certainly on the eve of a great discovery relative not only to the disintegration of the atom, but to its precipitation. But the secret of this has been known in the East for many centuries.

May I give an example of the precipitation of matter which came within the ambit of my own experience? I was staying at the house of a friend in Bombay preparatory to sailing for Europe, and mislaid the ring of keys belonging to my cabin trunks. In the morning I had no time to search for it, and as the baggage in question was already on the steamer, I resolved to break it open when I required it, and went on board. On the second day out what was my amazement on putting my hand into my left trousers pocket to find the ring of keys there where it most certainly had not been before. I simply could not conclude that it had been there all the time, for I had made a frenzied search in every pocket in the suit I was wearing. Some three years later I was in Calcutta once more. I had tipped one of the men-servants of the house rather heavily to register and send on my keys to London if he could find them, and I had not been five minutes in the house on my return when he asked me with a smile if I had duly received them. When I replied in the affirmative, he told me that he had taken them to a holy man who lived hard by, and who assured him that I would get them within a few hours, but

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he absolutely refused to tell me where this person lived, or to give me any further information, because, I suppose, we were not of the same faith.

An extraordinary controversy disturbed English occult circles at one time regarding the existence or otherwise of a secret sect residing in the Himalayas, known to the Theosophists as Mahatmas. But it is significant that the defenders of the theory that such people existed did not at any time draw upon Eastern opinion to justify their statements, for the very good reason, I suppose, that they were unable to enlist it in defence of them. As regards this question, it is a little difficult for a Mohammedan like myself to make any definite pronouncement, because it is obvious that in this respect the Hindu regards us as being just as much outside his circle as the European. At the same time it is possible to glean rather more than the Englishman does, simply because one happens to be an Eastern. I will say at once that all the evidence in my possession goes to make it absolutely certain that such a caste as the Mahatmas actually does exist. It must be remembered that Brahmanism and Buddhism are not only religions but philosophies of age-long standing. Even those Brahmans or Buddhists of the higher caste who do not take up the hermit life are men of the most extraordinary kind, and I, for one, have no doubt as to the nature of the powers they wield. It should be made plain, however, that they are not in the habit of wielding those powers unnecessarily or merely for the demonstration of the supernatural gifts they possess, their exalted attitude to material affairs generally rendering them incapable of such a cheap method of advertising themselves. No, the powers in question are only employed when necessity absolutely indicates their use.

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I have been assured by more than one of these men that such a brotherhood as that of the Mahatmas actually exists in the Himalayas, but naturally they refer to the subject with the greatest possible diffidence, and, indeed, show considerable distaste in speaking about it at all. What is more to the point, I have been informed by Hindus who have penetrated the utmost fastnesses of the Himalayas that they have actually encountered holy men dwelling in caverns and huts in these remote places. Some of these men, said my informants, gave them the impression of extreme old age and of the possession of immense wisdom. Finally, I may say, that no native of India doubts the existence of such a brotherhood, and my own considered opinion is that it really does exist, that it exercises special powers upon human life in India and throughout the East generally. Indeed from the many conversations I have had with Indians of the most intelligent type I have come to the conclusion that the Mahatma brotherhood is very much a fact.

But the prevailing magic of India, is, as I have said, the magic of the lower cultus. Everywhere the Black Art flourishes, and is, indeed, encouraged in the most extraordinary manner, even though the higher priesthood regards it as most offensive, and the laws of Manu definitely forbid it. Among the Kols of northern India and most of the jungle tribes, it is as rampant as the practice of ju-ju in Western Africa. Indeed with some of these peoples it takes almost the place of religion. In the northern jungle tribes the witch, known as *Dayan*, flourishes exceedingly. She is supposed to be able to restore the dead to life, to change people into animals, set fire to water, or to turn stones into wax. The witch, of whom there are large official sisterhoods, is usually a very handsome woman,

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scrupulously clean in dress and person, and decorated with a streak of vermilion in the parting of the hair. She is given to haunting graveyards in order to procure corpses for magical purposes. I remember seeing in Bengal an old woman who acted as a professor of witchcraft, and who had a regular school of young girls under her charge. Their instruction commenced with the act of withering pine trees, and proceeded with the taming of leopards and the raising of spirits, but it would indeed require volumes to describe what one has seen and heard of the magic of the East, real and imaginary.

Cricket East and West.

It was, however, the lure of Cricket that made me desert the wonderful life of the Indian hill stations for a time. There I found the players seated under the mango trees, sipping iced drinks, and waiting for the heat of the midday sun to abate.

And then the game with regard to which the dusky spectators are every bit as keen as those at Lords, applauding a big hit with shouts of " May you live two hundred years to delight us like this ! " or again, maddened with the excitement of it all, roar, " Oh, what a wonderful being this batsman is ! "

I wonder sometimes if England realizes what cricket has done for Britain as an Empire link ? It has brought India closer to England than anything else through centuries of English rule.

In India, as in England, the phrase " It is not cricket," has become synonymous with, " It is not fair, not honourable." As in England, in India it has become a national game.

But India has this advantage over England, that cricket may be played there the year round. And it is. It is

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BEDOUINS OF SYRIA CELEBRATING A FESTIVAL BY WAR DANCES

ARAB TOWN DWELLERS CELEBRATING THE IDD FESTIVAL

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played with enthusiasm in the grilling heat of the summer, when the field cannot boast a single blade of grass, and teams play on whatever is left of the pitch.

In summer, when the fast-moving ball raises a cloud of dust from the sun-baked earth, and the wicket is true to a fault, you would be surprised to see how many old and young engage in the game even at the expense of losing their business at the bazaars. It grips them more than anything else has done for generations.

Even in the rainy season, when the grass grows overnight so to speak, you may see eager men and boys out with bat and ball.

And cricket can be amusing in India. Once, during the official seasons, which differ in various provinces according to the degree of heat, but are generally accepted between October and March, I played in a match in Central India. After the first innings we were a century or more ahead of our opponents.

We did ourselves rather well at lunch, despite the fact that it was our turn to field, but that hardly explained our drowsiness when we went out to field.

Easy balls slipped between our fingers and I remember dropping three easy catches at least. Once I saw the ball double. "No ball" was frequently called, and we were beaten easily by four wickets. Later as our train steamed out from the railway station, the guard handed in a letter to our captain, saying that for a joke, hasish, a sort of drug that induces sleep, was mixed in our food at lunch.

Many Indian Princes have their private cricket elevens, engaging English professionals as coaches. One such was the late Maharaja of Kashmir. He was too old to play, but he took a delight in watching the game. He was solemnly assured that his team was good enough to defeat

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the M.C.C. And he believed it. The cricketers were special favourites with him.

He was rather short-sighted, and as it was common knowledge that he used to take a drug for an old malady, he was one day very much under its influence. Drowsingly he sat in the pavilion. I scored a four and was applauded.

The Maharaja awoke with a start and asked the meaning of the uproar. When told that an opponent had scored, he demanded that I be brought before him at once. I went, imagining that some reward awaited me.

Before I reached the pavilion, he was plunged into a doze. The game was held up while I awaited his awakening. After a time he opened his eyes and said " Dhur ! " which is an expression of disapproval.

Then he promptly dozed off again.

Warned that I ought to wait, I did so. Again the Maharaja blinked his eyes and asked his secretary to give me fifty gold coins as a reward for good play.

The wealth and grandeur of Kashmir State greatly impressed me ; but not till later when I actually was an executive officer in one of these States did I realize that the Little Kings of India really have a very hard day's work before them when they arise in the morning.

The average man regards the Maharajas as bejewelled, beturbaned and corpulent individuals whose pastime is spending money and whose court executioners would chop a man's head off at their mere nod. So much for the Arabian Nights Entertainment. In reality they work harder than most of their subjects. Their vast territories, in some cases larger than England, produce multifarious and exacting work ; and the bulk of it must be cleared off the same day. That is the main difference between the administration of Indian States and that of British India, for a

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subject of a Maharaja, who has grown " under the shadow of benign autocracy," will not wait for the answer to his application. He expects a decision the next morning, and he generally gets it. The symbol of authority never disappoints him. And as the final word is with the Maharaja in most cases, every paper has to be submitted to him, with the consequence that a Prince's work-day is of twenty-four hours.

True that many of the orders are passed by nods, smiles or growls, the amount of daily work nevertheless is so great that it takes several secretaries to meet the pressure. I remember a certain Maharaja who modelled his life, specially in the brevity of sleep, on Napoleon. He went to bed at 3 a.m. and when I used to arrive at the palace at dawn I always found him with files walking back and forward in a long corridor and writing the orders on them with a big blue pencil. Just a word here or there, and his mere yes or no showed that he had waded through the whole sheaf of papers. Shortly after daybreak the various ministers reported themselves separately to His Highness ; each with a bundle of papers, and then at 8 a.m. the Council met for an hour. Then the ruler went to dress. In less than fifteen minutes I was riding off with him to the experimental farm to see how the American cotton seeds were doing. A small meeting of the Agricultural Minister and others was held at the farm and the repeated explanation of the reason given to His Highness for the slow progress of Scottish oats, planted in an Indian soil by the officer in charge, made me such an expert that at Midlothian I could tell you which field was the best one.

On our way back we looked at the building department ; the Sanitary Inspector was sacked for not having removed the sugar cane leaves from the market place, and the

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Municipality Clerk fined for not seeing to the extinguishing of a street lamp, the thrusting of a hundred rupee note in the palm of a beggar woman at the wayside—who threw it away thinking it was mere waste paper—and then I was left with her to hail a policeman in order to cash the note for her while my master rode away towards his favourite wife's palace till lunch hour.

Slightly after midday, I was at the terrace of the palace again. His Highness was in deep consultation with the Chief of Police. Anon, the click of heels and the presenting of arms of the Royal Bodyguard all along the red and gold carpeted staircase announced the ruler. Confronting him, I noticed that anxiety sat on his brow. "You might telephone to the Treasury officer," he said to me, "and ask him to bring five thousand rupees in silver. In silver," he emphasized. Then he thought for a minute. "You might go and fetch it yourself," he added; "and gallop hard to —— village, and don't be a moment too late for my arrival there!" You get used to these imperious orders when you are in the service of an Indian Prince. But I had to recall all my intelligence before I could think it out that if I was to get to my master within the time then I must travel on motor-cycle. I scored and was at the appointed place much before him with the money.

And although I was not near the village, yet I heard roars of angry crowds and I felt something menacing lurking there; and so it was, for the Prince and the Chief of the Police on arriving where I was, left the horses and told me that the peasants were in revolt, and it was to quell them that the Maharaja had determined to walk to it from that distance. I was to enter the village unperceived whilst the other two waited behind a heap of chopped hay. Just before the public square of the village, men had

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climbed the trees to watch a procession organized as a protest, some women were wailing, while others stood with children shouting to their men-folk, and rustic lads ran hither and thither carrying long sticks on which their hoes or small spades or sickles were tied. Some petty clerks were being roughly handled and perfect pandemonium reigned everywhere. The elders of the village sat confabbing on raised platforms of the public square. Never have I seen such a spectacle of protest against a Maharaja before, and, retracing my steps, I said so to His Highness.

" It is well," he said. " I will see it through," and he strode boldly towards the infuriated crowd in spite of our protest and fears for his safety. He marched past the women, then the crowd gave way, and when he stood at the public square, the clamour died down like magic. Everyone looked up to him as if spellbound. " I am the Maharaja," he spoke, " your ruler ; against me you are protesting. But this is not the way of showing your grievance. My house expected better of you."

It acted as a miracle ; simple Indian peasants are as simple as children, they laugh in their tears : and one great roar of " Maharaja Ki Jai " (Long live our ruler) gladdened our hearts. His Highness was deeply moved, and on this manifestation of loyalty he took the coins from the bags that I had deposited beside him and scattered them amongst the crowd who but a few minutes before were ready to march against him. Both had seen the respective symbols ; the subjects their ruler, and the Prince his subjects.

I was still marvelling at the incident when the Maharaja rose from his afternoon tea-table and was dictating an official letter to his foreign secretary ; and then, after making a few purchases from the Delhi jewellers, he was

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seen deeply engrossed in conversation with an English officer about the efficiency of his small army. The educational secretary it was who tackled him at sunset about certain translations from the French and German, and at dinner an eminent scientist was giving us a discourse about the wireless. Shortly after ten, ministers of the council met again, at the termination of which I had to submit the household accounts and received instructions for an increase of pay to a hawk-keeper. The court magician played Indian tunes, when His Highness presented the purse to a champion wrestler ; and he was still busy with something or other as I took my leave. On my way out I heard the applause die away ; I could see straight ahead into the next tent, to where the officer in charge of the Games was assisting the A.D.C.'s to lay the never-failing bridge tables. Yes ! the life of a Maharaja is very strenuous indeed !

And it is so because the territories ruled by them in India are the only regions of that country where real Oriental pageantry and hoary traditions of Old Asia remain intact. Practically everywhere else, at least in India, that atmosphere which inspired the Arabian Nights is fast disappearing under the political and economic forces of the world. The regions over which these Maharajas rule are thus the real " Oases " of Oriental life in the desert of materialism of commerce and industry which machine age brings.

These " Oases " are important, too, for no less than one-third of India belongs to them. There are some 448 such states, scattered all over India. The people which they govern are more in number than the entire white population of that country. In extent some of their states are larger than many European kingdoms. The Gwalior State is

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fully two hundred square miles larger than the State of West Virginia : the Prince of Kashmir owns a land twice the size of New York State ; the dominions of Hyderabad are even larger in extent than England and Scotland put together.

Over the destinies of their subjects, the Princes of these States have absolute power. In former years, so it is said, it used to be quite easy to see a man's head imperilled by a mere nod of a Prince ; once, so legend has it, a man mouthed some uncomplimentary words to a Prince ; immediately a dozen sword blades descended upon the face of the man from the Maharaja's bodyguard. On the other hand, it is in his power to reprieve the life of any murderer and give no reason for it ; or bestow a handful of gold coins to a village bard, and go on doing so till the singer is hoarse or the sun is setting, when the temple bells hurry the Maharaja to his evening prayers.

In their internal administration they are quite free, and act as absolute monarchs of Old Asia. They have, however, an arrangement with the British whereby armed protection is accorded to them by the English against a foreign invasion. Further, most of them have direct friendly treaties with the British Crown, and consequently when they enter or leave British India a salute of thirteen to twenty-one guns, according to their respective importance, is fired in their honour by the English artillery. Both in and outside their States they are styled as His Highness, and are not subject to the British laws ; nor has the British Court any jurisdiction over them or their subjects.

In these self-sufficient India units, life contains the real essence of the Orient. The people of these States consider their ruler as their " Mai Bap " or " father and mother," that in their Prince is embodied all wisdom, all mercy

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and all grandeur ; and that he would look after them with kindness and sympathy like their own parents. The Maharaja rules often according to no fixed law, or at least according to the machine-made law of the West he makes no law, his word is law ; which if you were to take a long view of it comes so true, so benign for his people, that no rigid legal enactment of European type can rival it.

An Indian Prince, therefore, rules by instinct, which comes to him through hundreds of years of intimate association of his dynasty with his people. He has the mentality of the Orient, can speak the language of his people, was born amongst them, from very childhood his father had been dinning in his ears the art of government, had been warning him against certain actions ; in short when the Little King of India comes to occupy the throne of his fathers he has had an active training in statecraft for nearly twenty years. He regards his subjects as his children, they look upon him as their very own, " The Shadow of the Almighty," or the descendant of the Moon or the Sun God—almost a holy being. Such attachment between the ruler and the ruled is sadly lacking in those parts where the British rule over India.

The wealth of these Princes is enormous. His Exalted Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad's State yields about £55,000,000 annually. There are other States, too, with not a great deal less revenue than this figure. Many of them possess gold, silver and coal mines ; and the agricultural enterprise is of the highest kind. Although the bulk of the revenue is spent on railways, exploitation of mineral resources, and other official expenses, a very large proportion forms the Prince's share. Considering that all household expenses, the pay of their troops, the hospitality funds, etc., are separate, there is very little left

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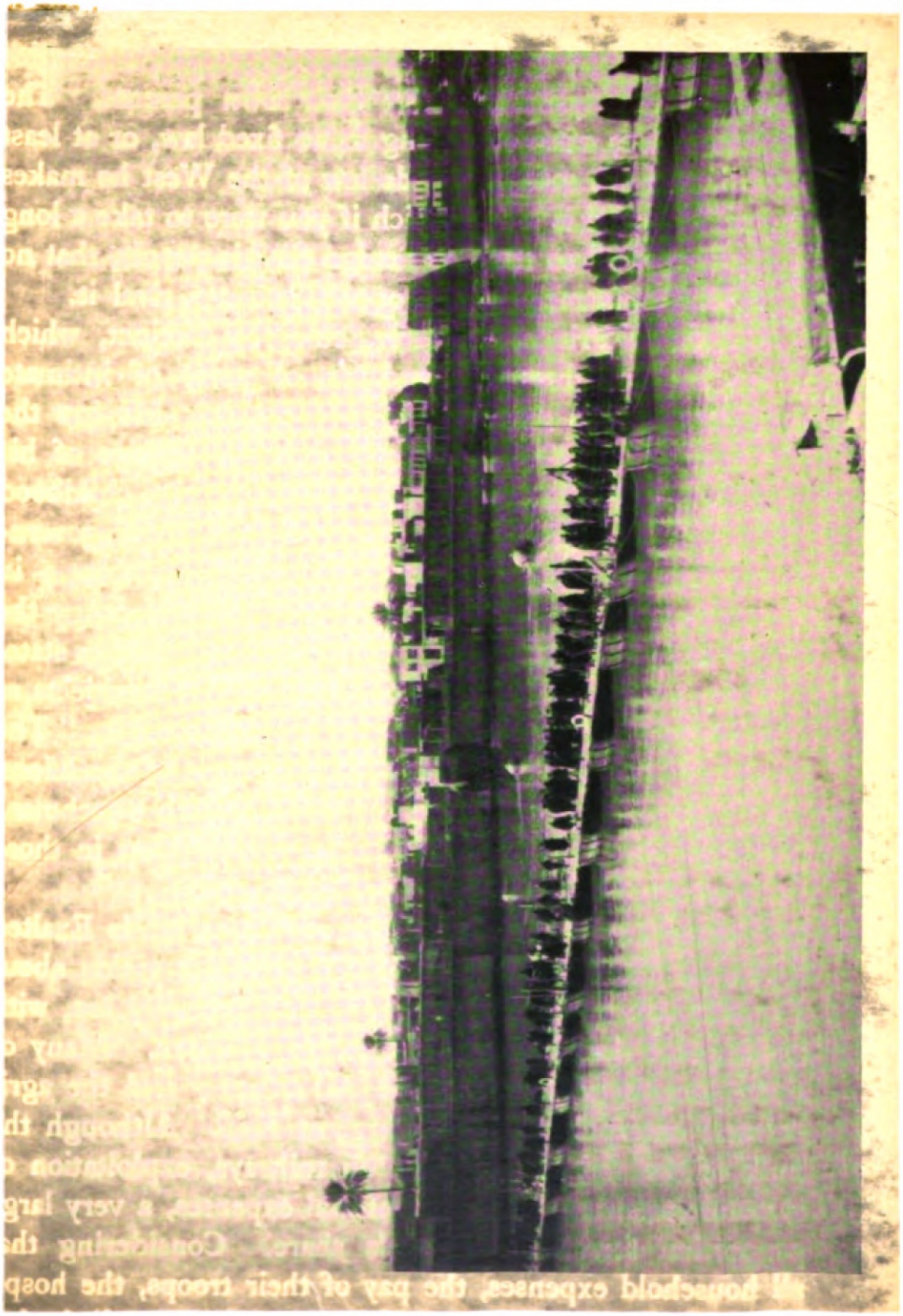

THE BOAT BRIDGE, BAGHDAD

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for a Prince to spend his annual small fortune upon. Consequently they either horde the gold in bars, or purchase jewels.

Year by year jewels of priceless value are bought by the Maharajas, for the sheer necessity of hording the never-ceasing annual wealth in some convenient form ; with the consequence that to-day the Nizam of Hyderabad is said to have nearly half a ton of jewels. In the inner apartments of their palaces underground passages with cement roofs and floors are reputed to run for several hundred yards, and it is no mere exaggeration to say that they are literally chock full of gold bullion, and the most valuable jewels that the world can provide.

All this is resorted to because the Princes, true to the ancient traditions, do not like to invest their money in industrial speculation, and according to the old customs, it would be derogatory to the dignity of an Indian Prince to keep his money in a bank. The gigantic accumulation of this wealth can be imagined when it is noted that this process of adding to the jewels has been going on for generations, since some of the ruling houses of the Maharajas boast of an ancestry centuries prior to the Mohammedan period of Indian history. And the Mohammedan dominance in one way or other remained in that country for close upon eight hundred years before the British came to India.

The more wealth you have the more you want, they say ; but if I have seen this old adage unjustified anywhere, it was undoubtedly in the Indian States. The Prince of one of these, with whom I was once spending a holiday, was so tired of his overflowing wealth that he literally could not bear the sight of his treasure house. After dinner one night he took me to where " the clods of earth " reposed, as he

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styled the items of his jewellery. I was amazed, for it was a veritable Alladin's Cave. Going through the labyrinth of his underground treasury, soft light from candles struck upon diamonds, ropes of pearls, trays full of rubies and sapphires, and literally sacks full of gold coins. There were stacks of gold and silver ornaments, precious metal in the form of scores of water jugs, trays, candlesticks, even wash basins. In the inner chamber, there was a sort of bookcase made of solid gold running all along the wall of the room, where he had had electric light installed, because there stood in the far corner to a distance of some thirty feet a truly marvellous miniature temple of beaten gold. Its steeple was studded with rubies and diamonds. The eyes of the elephant-god were of sapphire ; on the cloth which covered the body of that Hindu divinity a million or more pearls were sewn. There was no silver in the place. There was so much of it, he attested, that it was crowded out.

The surfeit of wealth which had come upon this Hindu Prince friend of mine, was not unusual, for I know the Maharaja of Udaipur could not touch jewellery himself. He used to have his servants put on costly rings and drape themselves in flowing robes of gold thread work, whilst he himself wore nothing but clothes made of coarse home-spun.

But some of them are not averse to enjoying the good things of life, for the average personal household staff of a Maharaja may be several hundreds. Generally there are a hundred or so A.D.C.'s, some of them have to be in attendance at the outer, and others at the inner apartments. They are all armed, like the bodyguards outside the palace. Their duties are to protect the Prince against any attempts on his life, either by bullet of a relative or the

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poisoning of food by a younger brother or even the heir, who might be in a hurry to claim the throne. Then there are servants who attend to the smoke-room of the Maharaja ; others who massage his legs after the day's work, prepare his bath, comb his hair, look after his clothes, and perform a hundred and one minor duties for their master's comfort. It is not only one person for one job—there are several. There might, for instance, be ten men in charge of the smoke-room, some cleaning his pipes, others making special cigarettes for him and so forth. But amongst this lot of personal servants, those who cook his food or attend at table are very highly paid and rank high in the household strata ; for the fear of poisoning a Prince due to the jealousy of a rival is a very real menace. The food of the Maharaja is tasted by half a dozen of the senior servants in addition to the medical attendant and the Home Minister before the seal of a box containing the cooked food is opened at the Prince's table.

Palaces with extensive gardens are given to each Maharanee, or the wife of a Prince, by her husband. A large monthly sum as pocket money, rarely less than ten thousand pounds a month, in addition to a large female staff, is granted to each ; and all these palaces are encircled by several high walls where not even a male relative dare enter.

The Maharaja visits his wife or wives according to his own whim ; and as soon as the Prince is in the ladies' palaces he is to all intent and purpose a lost man. No message from the outside world can be conveyed to him, till it pleases him to come out of the sacred precincts, as they are sometimes called. The visit of a Maharaja to the palace of his spouse is somewhat of a ceremony in itself. As soon as he approaches the outer gates of the high walls

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of the palaces, the men guards present arms. He enters another circle ; here armed women bow low to him ; " The mighty presence ! the mighty presence is approaching," they call all along the line of women servants who stand struck in awe and obedience. The third and the fourth corridor are approached in the same way, till at the sixth portal the lady of the palace greets him with garlands of fresh flowers while maidens shower rose petals in his way. A priestess holding incense leads the way to yet another secluded courtyard, where the Maharaja and Maharanee are never left alone, but a dozen or so handmaidens bring cool drinks or sway the fans, or perchance a woman singer sings melodiously, whilst dancing-girls disport themselves on the lawn beside a marble fountain and make music with tiny jingling bells on their ankles as they run hither and thither to amuse the Princess and the Little King of India.

Some such relaxation is needed by hard-working men, but in view of what these Indian Princes have to shoulder in responsibility of large Government departments, it was surprising to me to see that they have time for every facet of Oriental activity in their crowded life. They mix work and pleasure in just the right proportion ; and yet never forget the cultivation of Asian art. Poetry is one of them : and in the Court of one of them I saw it flourish in its old glory. The prince held a poetical contest, and it was thus :

The meeting, at which the Maharaja presided closely resembled the Contests of Song so common in Europe during the Middle Ages, and recalled the poetic strife dear to the hearts of troubadours. The procedure of these gatherings is the circulation of a given couplet by the chairman ten days prior to the event. Intending competitors are expected to compose a set of verses of the same metre and rhyme as in the couplet given out. The hall

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in which the contest was held was gaily decorated for the occasion. Rich carpets were spread on the floor for the accommodation of the guests. Coloured candles burned in chandeliers and the chairman's seat of honour was flanked by ornate candelabra.

The poets of repute sat close to the chairman, while their lesser brethren clustered around the walls. On the entrance of a bard of any note, the entire assembly rose to its feet and made obeisance.

The chairman, the Maharaja in this case, opened the proceedings by reading out the couplet, and, lighting a candle, handed it to the poet immediately on his right. This was the signal for the contest to begin. The poet, with a great assumption of dignity, adjusted his spectacles and unrolled his manuscripts. Then he commenced to recite his verses with all the elocutionary power at his command. His audience showed their appreciation of his stanzas by loud cries of approval, but never manifested it by clapping their hands, which is considered tantamount to ridicule. Some verses of merit were repeatedly read, and the writer had on several occasions heard stanzas repeated as many as fourteen times. The recitation of one poet being over, the one next to him read in his turn, and so the " poetical candle " passed on.

Poetic human nature is very much the same in all countries, but in the East its manifestations are perhaps more marked. Should a singer's work be too severely criticized, fierce altercations arise, and many volumes of classical poetry are referred to. That was, however, not an exceptional case when I saw an Indian Prince show to the full how he, like his other brothers of the Order, patronized the Indian Art.

Perhaps as a small repayment for some of my good

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deeds, it was my fortune to be attached to the service of a Prince for a while. Somehow it was discovered that I could organize things better than my fellows, so I was entrusted with the task of planning the Christmas celebrations of that Indian State, which gave me a full view of the extent of Oriental hospitality which the Maharajas bestow upon their guests. I found myself in that capacity in the camp of the Maharaja in mid-winter ; and I write of a day there.

That morning, when His Highness emerged from his tent at 6.30 a.m., he looked distinctly glum, and small wonder, for he was anxious about the comfort of his guests and as to what arrangements had been made. He had ordered me to arrange a gymkhana. This gymkhana being the first item in the programme for the Christmas festivities, I was given instructions to proceed immediately to the seat of the Kingdom to continue the arrangements there. Upon reaching my headquarters I was met by the members of the Celebration Committee, alias the Household Committee, and we entered into a discussion of how the amusements were to be arranged. Hawking, steeplechasing, pigeon shooting, pillow fighting and other games were to be included in the programme, and the discussion arose through the inefficiency of the Committee to appreciate the various sports. One could understand and sympathize not a little with a fat old Lallaji when it came to arrangements of a steeplechase entrusted to him : and the hawking competition which fell to my lot : as beyond knowing the hawk from the prey, the sport was a mystery to me. Nevertheless we drew up an historic scheme for the occasion. The conference was punctuated on all sides by yawns which owing to the early hour became more and more difficult to suppress, in fact it seemed the chief aim of each member to finish his part and arrange

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himself as comfortably as possible in a more or less recumbent position.

Personally I think that the majority of us would have remained there at all uncomfortable costs for the rest of the night, or rather morning, except that we were expected to take our fully matured plans to His Highness as soon as they were completed. It was 4.30 a.m. when we left that bare cold room looking as though we had been playing cards, staking our holy all and having staked, lost, and drew ourselves into merciful oblivion. We had little to say on the way back and the only grateful recollections I retain of the week is that I felt warmer at the end than I had done for hours before.

As we arrived back the day was just beginning for those who had been fortunate enough to snatch a few hours' sleep. For ourselves, it was difficult to determine when our night had ended and our day begun. The camp guards were being relieved by others who yawningly took their places and when we appeared on the scene as usual they shouted the challenge " Halt ! " It is well I was not alone and that in spite of all we had gone through some member was still sufficiently well disposed to mankind to reply in the approved manner—" Friend! " Had I been alone, and replied as I felt was fitting to the time and circumstances, the sentry would have been justified in using the power given to him of dealing with anyone like myself who failed to reply as given in the State Rule Book, on which occasion this valuable account would never have been written and the sentry would have had an over-estimated opinion of the duty he had done towards his Royal Master that day. Truly to know all is to understand all.

All tastes were catered for during that Christmas and New Year gathering of the Prince's guests. There were

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scholars, poets, soldiers, sporting men and others who gathered round the Maharaja. During the day we split into parties according to our respective interests in enjoyment: but none gripped my imagination in a greater degree than our gathering at which on the request of an European scholar we discussed the Rustic poetry of the Hindus.

These songs are sung so commonly, that one who took sufficient trouble to see real India would be delighted to hear the village youths singing their love-chants as they drive the cattle home in the gloaming. The poems are generally composed in two forms, first and chiefly, "Kubits" and "Dohras." The latter is usually a quatrain of some eight syllables, in which, like Persian and Urdu poetry, the second and fourth stanzas only rhyme. It is written in one line, with a divisional mark in the middle. But though such laws govern the construction of "dohras," yet a whole ode is written in the form of so many "dohras"; for instance, four "dohras" would make the ode usually sung. When this arrangement is effected, it is the common custom to make the composition as if the lover and the loved were conversing in "dohras"; in other cases there may be a dialogue, carried on between the tongue and the heart, or between the body and the soul, as it were. In another kind of poem composed of "dohras," one "dohra" is an observation, and the other a reply. The most popular composer of these is Bhepari Lall, author of "Satso-Aya"—"Seven Hundred"—but the enthusiasm of his admirers stops short when they make enquiries regarding the biography of the poet. The following is a "dohra" of his composition, in which a forlorn wife sings as she notices the beauties of Basunt—Spring—around her, and a girl offers her a bunch of flowers, in token of the "Spring Festival."

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AN IRAQ CAMEL MERCHANT IN BAGHDAD

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" The lively drum is heard around ;
The tambourine and cymbals sound ;
I in flames of absence burn,
And languish for my Love's return.

The women all around me sing,
And own th'inspiring joys of Spring :
While I, from darts of ruthless love,
Never-ending torments prove.

The amorous kokal strains his throat
And pours his plaintive pleasing note ;
My breast responsive heaves with grief,
Hopeless and reckless of relief.

When he again shall glad my hours
Then, girl, I'll take thy blooming flowers ;
But now my love is far away,
Where should I place thy Basunt gay ? "

Another " dohra " of impressive nature, from the same poet, and coloured with religious sentiment, is worth quoting. It is a dialogue between a husband and wife :

" Wife, why thus sadly gaze around,
And why thus heave such sighs profound ?
And whence these strange alarms ?

Husband, because thy locks are grey,
And all thy youth hath passed away,
In wicked syren's arms."

The " kubits " are short poems complete in themselves, and it is difficult to interpret the term in any English synonym. They may be regarded as long stanzas varying in number, but in accordance with rhythm, the syllables ranging from twenty-three to twenty-four. It is considered to be the easiest form of all. Then again there are others, consisting of twenty-two, thirty-two and thirty-four, called " Dhunduks," " julharrun," and " mannoharrun." In all " kubits " the rhyme recurs at every second line, often the same word being used. At the end of the poem as an integral part of

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the composition, comes the poet's name, and it is so well worded that the name appears to be the only suitable word for that special place.

In the description of female charms the Hindu poets have taken their inspiration from the aspect of natural things. Their poems abound in allegories and metaphors, but not to that licentious degree which is at once the glory and the real defect of Persian poetry. The Hindu nymph is lovely, but her charms are not exaggerated to that unimaginable extent which singularly characterizes the Persian or Urdu style. We are carried away with the mythological beauty and the charm of the poem, " to repose among shady bowers of lofty deodars or wander by the side of cooling streams, to weave jessamine petals in her tresses, or in the lover's absence have our heart lacerated in anguish only to melt away as a liquid ruby."

The favourite poets whose " kubits " are on every rustic's tongue, are Tulsi Dass and Soor Dass, both of whom are said to have flourished at the Court of Akbar the Great. One of the often recited poems of Soor Dass describes a scene in which Radha, a maiden and her sisters with some male friends were in the midst of revelry, on the bank of a river ; Kanya, a suitor of Radha—who is believed to have been killed in battle—returns home, and on being informed of his sweetheart's whereabouts visits the jungle, hides himself behind a tree, and sees the company make merry. Being unable to witness the scene, and equally unable to restrain his injured feelings, he comes out from his hiding-place and appears before the astonished company, who are soon put to shame. The scene is well depicted :

" A merry group at evening hour,
Kanya spied in shady bower,
Lovely as pearls on a lady's breast ;
And Radha shone above the rest.

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Sweetly to their chiming bells,
On the glad ears the chorus swells,
And, as so true they strike the ground
Each heart grows lighter at the sound.
Th' enraptured youth no more concealed,
At once his radiant form revealed:
And how shall I, by words convey
Their consternation and dismay!
Their cheeks, till then unknown to shame,
Were reddened now with mant'ling flame;
And their sweet eyes, of lotus hue,
Bent like lilies filled with dew."

Nor are they the less skilful in the prose-poems—poetic chants rather than songs—which of late have been the feature of their compositions. In these one notices how for ages in the East, poetry has been composed by devotees, those wonderful spiritually minded men who had always a message to give, a secret to reveal. Nature is seen through spiritual eyes, things viewed in the wondrous tropical maze of higher intellectual images are the pictures of "a mirror that reflects God himself!" The jungle whispers are enlivened by "ideals which separate the jewel from the clod and stone of the earth," as shown in the following prose-poem, "The Marble Temple":

"O my Goddess of Peace! O my Beautiful one! I seek sanctuary in thy garden from the lurid flashes and turmoil of war. But thy roses are withered and the fountain leaps no more with the liquid joy of life. Art thou in thy white marble niche? O my Idol of Idols!

"Or hast desolation come upon thy shrine and the dust of the arena powdered thy tresses? Ah! Sorrow hangs on thy brow and lo! I perceive a mark impressed upon thy cheek, as by the fangs of a dragon in conflict. O my Idol of Idols, why art thou forlorn?—or is it only mine eye that painteth this dismal view?

"Do I not remember the lofty crest of thy temple which rose in splendour? Its glittering pinnacles touched the skies—O my Idol of Magnificence! O my Sublime! Why art thou so changed? Why dost thy glory—which once was enthroned by adoring hands—totter under the veil of oblivion?

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> "Be this the mirror of mankind, reflecting their vanity and showing all life as a farce, and time a masquerade. But, O my Idol of Idols! the sun of thy grandeur will pierce the darkest clouds of human vice, and what is noble will for ever remain; so shall thy torch of happiness glow, till existence furls its wings, O my Beautiful One! O my Supreme! O Thou, the Marble Temple of Peace."

Oceans of philosophy have been explained in the simplicity of this language. Beauty expressed has the real colour of the occult, that aspect which is a manifestation of the Divine. A manly godliness of spirit is apparent in all these immortal songs. It is so with all imperishable verse, whether ancient or modern; and it shows not only the sublimity of the message with which they were charged but the deep spiritual lore of real India. No wonder then that the bearers of these songs for centuries are regarded as men gifted with a particular holiness, for he who creates even a poem must bear resemblance to the Creator of all that is beautiful and good and true. Theirs was the art of interpreting the Divine element in mankind and it shall remain when all else is Westernized; for though the face of Hindustan may change, her soul will still remain.

The Maharaja had been taking a great deal of interest in the researches of these matters of Old Lore, and employed State Scholars in compiling the Folk Songs and the Rustic poetry of India.

It was not only the Scottish guests of the Prince, who remained behind after we had ushered in the New Year into the State: for the fun of the celebration was but half begun, as we had a couple of shoots to go through yet. After a "Scholarly night" I had retired to bed at 2.45 a.m. in my tent when I was summoned again by His Highness. The upshot of the whole story was that it had pleased the Maharaja to order that a duck shoot on the morning, four hours later, was to be arranged. The Rolls Royce, No. 4,

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was to be despatched to the nearest ammunition shop—the royal magazine being at that moment like Mother Hubbard's cupboard—to get two thousand No. 4 cartridges. My brain moves very slowly at that hour of early morning, but dull though I might have been, it was borne upon me, that it was as much as my job was worth if the command was not carried out. I hurried to my tent, and having sent the car and the man to get the needful, I had to return again and help to draw the butts and collect ten rupees each from the hopeful sportsmen. Now let me state here that there was not the slightest necessity for drawing these butts, save it be in return for ten rupees. It may be said with certainty that the ten rupees were not very easily raised at that time of the morning, as a lady guest was allowed to win at bridge the previous night, and many pockets were empty.

The butts were drawn and, as luck would have it, the best one fell to me. At this point I could not help rejoicing inwardly in the thought that my money was after all well spent. The joy was, however, a short-lived one, for it was nudgingly brought to my notice that all was not right; and many grimaces and gesticulations hovered round this chosen one, and one bolder than the rest whispered to me to offer my butt to a guest, for a guest is "sacred." I failed to see eye to eye with the gentleman and looked what I felt; but at this point the camp dissolved itself into two parts, and as the second part consisted of myself alone, I had to offer my butt to someone else. It was accepted, and sport was over for me before it started.

Seven in the morning came all too soon; we arranged ourselves at the lake, and I, who had pulled off the best butt, found myself butting away in the car with my portable typewriter. It may here be questioned why I did not

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butt in the camp, but then a query like this would only be put by such people as non-members of the famous R-Gun Club, of which the rules and bye-laws are many and varied, and subject to change without notice to any member, on the mere wave of a hand where guests are concerned : nor indeed is it desirable that any member should understand those rules. They are there because every club must have rules ; but they need not necessarily be binding upon the members, much less upon guests.

Now for the duck shoot, or rather the duck bombardment. The birds were plentiful and rose in huge coveys. No sooner a batch appeared than the shelling started. I could not hear myself type. The bombardment recalled war-time days, and—butt or no butt, I decided to butt myself too in the general attack. Some things of the cave-man tactics possessed me, I grasped my fowling piece, yelled to my shikaris to follow me, and plunged my way to the middle of the lake. We were thigh-deep in the water, the cartridge boxes were perched unsteadily on the branches of a submerged acacia tree and I added to the general din with a vengeance. Sometimes one, sometimes four, sometimes none fell to my gun ; at least twice I remember firing right and left barrels together. The water around me was simply littered with empty cartridges and ducks ; it was great !

The shoot was to be over at sunset, but a shrill whistle from His Highness declared the game to be over at 4 p.m. We splashed our way back to the bank, where the ducks were to be counted and the winner declared. Being furthest into the lake I was last to reach, and many were the speculations regarding my bag. Inwardly I had a sensation that the various guests, having seen four shikaries laden with game, were not feeling quite so pleased with me as I was

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with myself. The latter proved to be the case My ducks outnumbered them all, and consequently I had trespassed on one of the fixed rules of the R-Gun Club : the rule said (it was, of course, not included in the printed booklet of the bye-laws) " none must shoot more than the guests." In any case, a young lady member of the guests' party and an honorary member of the club was declared the winner, on account of the handicap—handicap, mark you, which was arranged after the ducks had been counted. I had the further pleasure of presenting to the lady, beforementioned, the proceeds of the butt tickets, thus :

After dinner, it was my pleasing duty, or otherwise, to make a speech. " Your Highness," I began, " ladies and gentlemen. It has been a wonderful, nay, a memorable day, in the annals of our gun club—(applause, in which I painfully observed my wife joined, she was then not in possession of the full facts ; she is now). The success of this shoot is entirely due to the sporting spirit of Your Highness, and speaking of the sporting instinct," I continued, " I cannot but mention the name of the lady who has won at to-day's shoot. I may say that she richly deserved to win." At this instance I could not help kicking myself under the table ; I hope it was myself. Thereupon I presented the purse to the winner, and when the sounds of applause died away, I could see straight ahead into the next tent, to where the officer-in-charge of the games departments was assisting the A.D.C.'s and friend Pandit H.G. to lay the never-failing bridge table. The Maharaja sent me a small packet later in the evening. It contained banknotes four times the value of the prize which I had foregone. Inside was a brief note from the Prince ; it said, " Thanks for keeping the old traditions, our guests are ' sacred,' their pleasure is the honour of the State." What more proof would you want

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of Asia's real hospitality ? It was a good lesson to me, for having been some time in the West, I was forgetting our "uncivilized way of sport." True, we Easterners must be more than a little mad.

A few of these Indian Princes whom I had the pleasure of meeting at closer range, had been representing India at the Round Table Conference in London It might be as well to introduce them here once again.

It must be now more than twenty years since I first saw the great Maharaja Partab Singh come all the way from Kashmir to bathe in the holy Ganges at a Hindu Festival Day. Thousands of Hindu devotees lined the Ghats, each received a gold piece : and with the first ray of the morning sun Partab Singh stepped into the sacred pool. His nephew, Hari Singh, led him to the river.

And now Hari sits on the throne of his uncle. Within six years of his reign His Highness, Shri Harisinghji Bahadur, to give him his full title, has shown that he carries the administrative traditions of his House most magnificently. The peacefulness which prevails in his Hindu State between the Hindus and Moslems, where over 90 per cent. of the population is Moslem, proves the fact that a Maharaja is above petty communal differences which are such a sad feature of life in British India.

It is to his genius, too, that a system of government has now been installed, by which a more intimate connection is maintained between his ministers, himself and his people : otherwise miscarriage of justice in his territory of nearly ninety thousand square miles would never have been a rarity as it is now. Also at this early age to be the Pro-Vice Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, is ready enough tribute to his capacities, amongst some 448 rulers of a stretch of the country as large as one third of Europe.

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H.M. KING FEISUL, RULER OF IRAQ, WITH HIS SON

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But if you would see the real grandeur of the mighty Sikh Raj, go to Patiala, and see its ruler at work. That the ruler of that State led the Princes' Delegation at the Indian Round Table Conference might be an incident which anyone acquainted with Maharaja Bhupindra Singh's acquirements would expect; but what thrills me is that he, of all men of his Order, should still find time for recreation and sport.

Those who, like myself, know the scenes behind the life of these Little Kings of India, would unquestionably admit that the Maharaja of Patiala is probably the most hard-working man of our time. The first streak of the morning finds him riding hard, often a distance of forty miles. On the way he would pull up his horse at a wayside village well to hear the news of the village. Those simple, lovable people adore him, some cling to the stirrups, others touch his feet. Their idol of sympathy of protection is Bhupindra Singh, the Maharaja of Patiala, for his word is law, and there men like nothing better than personal emblem of authority, because he can right their wrongs, by a mere smile or nod: they do not need to wait under the Lu smitten acacia trees of the Ferunghi's courts or be howled down by a Tahsilder. The Maharaja is at work the whole day with only one break at noon; he tires out at least six secretaries, for he has a giant's capacity for sheer hard honest work.

And yet with this crowded life few, if any, Maharajas have flitted more conspicuously upon the stage of world politics than has Bhupindra Singh. He sat at the Imperial War Conference; practically every European country bestowed decorations on him, he was mentioned in dispatches at the Kohat fighting; even during the Anglo-Afghan War of 1919 he saw service. He is one of the greatest personalities of his age, whose counsel as the real leader of princely India has a tremendous force for good.

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Lastly, what might be said about His Highness Nawab Bahadar Hamidullah Khan, the ruler of Bhopal State ! The fascinating point about him is that his personality is overpowering, yet your spirit is not chilled before him. He speaks with the unconventionality of an ordinary man, a man who makes you feel his equal, and he a prince of great lineage ! It is, perhaps, because he has escaped the hot-house upbringing of would-be Little Kings of India.

In four years, this smiling young Prince has done more for his people than half a dozen others twice his age. He has reformed the legal and administrative departments of his State, has even given Legislative Assembly to Bhopal, has already shown surplus in his budget ; and yet another man would have sagged under the stress of a mighty kingdom of nearly 7000 square miles, such as he possesses. But above all his influence amongst the Moslems of India towards sanity in political affairs is a matter, the extent of which is impossible of exaggeration. Being only second to the Nizam, as a Mohammedan ruler, he may be said to have saved the Moslem cause by proving that in the real essence the interests of Moslem India do not, cannot clash with those of the British : that steadying fact of his character I knew well in my comradeship with him at Aligarh School : and ah ! what a comrade, what a school !

A few men, too, from British India, who represented their country at the Conference are worthy of mention. In them you have that remarkable lawyer, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, then the able administrator of the Nizam's kingdom, Sir Akbar Haidri, and last, but not the least, the warrior chief of the Khyber Pass, Nawab Sir Abdul Qayum Khan, without whom the problem of the defence of India none can solve. Without knowing these personalities, you will not understand the political drama which is being staged

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in India ; also as they have excited considerable interest in England, a closer view of these personalities is indicated.

When Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru once recently burdened himself with the onerous task of reconciling Mahatma Gandhi with the idea of the Round Table Conference, and failed, his enemies rejoiced in thinking that another shaft had been driven home. But Sir Tej is not a new " peacemaker."

Even before he became the Law Member of Governor-General's Council, he had been steadily strengthening the Indian Moderates for a whole generation. In a country like India, where political passion is easily fanned into flames, it is by no means a small achievement that he has not only curbed but has actually directed those lawless spirits towards channels of nation-making.

I once had the honour of presiding at a meeting where Sir Tej was the distinguished guest at a British University town. The sensational aspect of the Indian national aspirations had caught up the audience. A rather too-loyal speaker was being heckled. There was hissing and jeering ; then pandemonium broke out. Shouting, yelling students could not be distinguished from over-excited British enthusiasts, who at the time appeared to love India more than the Indians themselves.

Then Sir Tej rose. The storm beat about him. " Down with the British ! Down with the Indian traitors ! " were the angry cries that filled the hall. He lifted his arm : " Friends, please listen to me," he said, vainly endeavouring to raise his voice above the general din. The tempest raged the fiercer. And then an extraordinary thing happened. They still saw Sir Tej standing at the dais waiting to speak. He would not be howled down. An honest light burnt in his eyes. It was almost uncanny to notice the

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waves of protest recede a little first, then gradually quieten down.

With no emotion he continued ; and it was not until we had slept over the wild night, that we realized having listened to a rebuke, the finest, the most delicate, that any man of culture can ever inflict. The witchery was not in his tongue, rather in the intensity of conviction with which he spoke of India's destiny.

He is as free from the communal taint as from bowing to the ogres that dance in the lurid lights of animosity for the legitimate interests of a foreigner. He has never beaten the big drum to become a leader, and yet no discerning man who has the good of India at heart can afford not to acknowledge him as one of the most considerable men of Hindustan.

Amongst the Moslems at the Conference, special lights glimmered upon two giant warriors of very different fame : the one hailing from the purer air of the Khyber Pass, the other from the looming lanes of dying Delhi. The former, Sir Abdul Qayum Khan, known by his pet name of A.Q., is a man both of quality and quantity. Tall, erect, and with a warlike glint of a Khyber Chief in his eyes, he darts about the gathering with the litheness so characteristic of his race on the Afghan borderland. He speaks with the directness of a soldier-mind, and carries his three-score and three years lightly. The latter, the late Mr. Mohamed Ali, who liked to be styled as the Moulana, also of height and girth, was not entirely unknown to the students of politics as the younger of the Ali Brothers. He was said to have divorced the Congress.

Forty-three years ago when the celebrated Mullah Sahib of Kotah had feasted his Yusifzai Pathans under the rocks of the Khyber, he announced his intention of sending his grandson A.Q., then a youth of twenty-one, to help the Ferunghi Raj in ushering peace and contentment into

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the Frontier Province of India. The Greybeards of the mighty clans shook their heads : " Nay, Nay ! " they said, " Mullah Sahib, thou art both a religious head and our leader in battle ; how can one of thy kind go to supervise the tame life of the husbandmen ? The craft of a warrior's son is with the Tulwar, not with the plough, the shear, and the sickle. Thus it has always been in our highland story." But the Mullah Sahib's word was law, and when he had resolved upon his grandson becoming a man of peace and not of war, who was to say him nay ? Nor has the illustrious son belied the expectations of his great sire.

With this drama, Sir Abdul Qayum leaped into his magnificent career. From the subordinate position of service to the highest appointment under the British Crown in India, his one mission in life has been to preach against all wars, and to make all disturbances impossible. It is easy to be a pacifist in well-ordered England, and to gather a crowd ; but amongst men who have known no law but the trigger-law, to overbalance the touch of the sword with education is a task fit for a Titan ; and A.Q. is a Titan of no mean order, for he alone is the man who has slain the myth that the people of the North-Western Province were a mere conglomeration of rapacious brigands, by drawing them close in the folds of Pathan nationhood. This he has done by patient, steady and continuous educational work amongst his loving people.

His services, unostensible, but passionate for the Pathan cause, often ignored, indeed, at times misunderstood not a little, withal have singled him out as the man of highest integrity of his time.

If we had the courage to own it, he held the key of Indian safety in his hands more often than many would care to acknowledge. Have not all the invaders in Indian

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history gone through the Khyber, and did he not more than any other man stop invasion of India? How often it was a near thing during the Great War is now no more a secret. This one man kept the bridge. And that is the service that A.Q. has done to the Hindu country. He has been more than a legion in Indian defence. But he has ever hidden his virtues under a bushel.

In India you may find men with greater skill in political finesse, perhaps with more aspirations too, but as far as sheer hard work and the ability to do it are concerned, in a country where the toughest fibre softens, Sir Akbar Haideri, who represents the Nizam's Government, is an easy first. His life has been a song of devotion to duty, and proves how only spade work can lift a man to the highest rung of the ladder of fame. It is a poem of action, with a surprisingly rapid action too, which fills every hour of his day; how otherwise account for his speedy progress from a mere provincial service start, to the pinnacle of power in a state which equals the kingdom of Italy in dimensions, and in potentialities is richer than five European powers put together.

Not only is he a financial minister of Hyderabad, but the emblem of that grandeur with which the Imperial Moghuls used to mention the Nizams of old. By heritage and upbringing the roots of his mind might be embedded in the past, yet his actions are the actions of this youthful age: virile, cool, dispassionate, all those gifts which are necessary to the administrator of a territory not only useful to its people, but which has to continue exercising a steadying effect upon the oft-ruffled politics of British India.

After associating with such good friends, and seeing such colourful scenes, it was hard to leave India; but one had to obey the wanderlust, and I journeyed westwards to Europe by way of that beautiful island called Ceylon.

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CHAPTER XII

THE MAGIC OF THE CANNIBAL

EVER since the gangway was lifted at Colombo, and I saw the sunburnt visage of a middle-aged Englishman under a particularly worn topee, I had thought that I knew the man. Constantly I had come face to face with him when the steamer ploughed its way through the open seas towards Aden. Beyond a side-glance this curious and aloof man defied acquaintance. But something fascinated me about my fellow-passenger—he had almost an occult influence on me. One night when the stars hung from the sky in bunches like giant and glowing pieces of the moon, that enchanting scene so gripped me that my coffee cup slipped from my hand ; it rolled over the railing and fell in the lap of someone sitting in his deck chair. The sleeper woke up with a start, as if from a trance, and as I hastened to apologize, my eyes met the same mysterious silent man who, I thought, had been making an extra effort to avoid me.

After profound apologies, I resolved to take the opportunity. "Pardon me," I said, "but have we not met before?" The man looked up. "Yes!" he grunted, "yes, perhaps we have met in the moon." That grunt of his—a little mannerism as it was—flashed a host of memories. It emboldened me. "We have not met in the moon, old boy," I spoke half humorously. "Come, come, Charlie, do you forget that Pathology classroom?" He

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had stiffened ever so slightly, then he gave it up, and the whole association of our undergraduate days we recounted.

He had failed twice in his finals, the professor had been hard on him, he thought. The War came on, he served in the Army, and then after a little love affair, went to the East to lose himself. But now he was returning. He did not want to know any of his old haunts. Whether Muriel had gone to Canada or had married someone else he did not care. He just wanted to spend a quiet summer in England after a dreadful time in the wilds of Ceylon.

Not till the steward was putting out the lights did we realize that we were on the wrong side of the deck, where ladies slept. But Charles Munro, though this is not his real name for obvious reasons, besides being a good all-round cricketer, and a mimic of his national bard, was also a good story-teller. What he began to tell me of experiences in the back of beyond interested me so much that we went to the men's side of the deck. Within ten minutes we too had brought up our mattresses on the deck, and I was once again listening to him. "You did not stick long to your botanical researches?" I asked. "Well!" he said, with that Scottish drawl which was characteristic of him, "Well, you see, I got into a sort of man-eaters' business." "Man-eaters! Good heavens! You were not amongst the cannibals." Now what he related brought him as close to being a man-eater as any civilized man wishes to be. And it was as well for him that the spell was broken.

It transpired that he had qualified in some way or other in pharmacology in Kandy, and by way of research, he had sallied forth to collect some herbs, which the natives thought would cure malaria. One day he set out in search of those uncharted regions of the island which even the aeroplanes have not been able to penetrate. Charlie was

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THE FRIDAY MOSQUE AT TEHERAN IN A SNOWSTORM

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desperate, he did not care what happened to him. He would be an explorer, a discoverer of herbs that would free mankind from fever. But now I must let him use his own words.

" Desperately," he said, " I wandered on, the terror of the jungle on me. It was unnerving and paralysing my volition. I was indeed lost in these endless and pitiless leagues of enveloping greenness without hope of exit or rescue. Fool that I had been not to take the advice of my shikari ! I did not know Ceylon, I had not bargained for such conditions as I now found myself in. Beaten, exhausted, I floundered on mechanically, my rifle feeling as heavy as the beam of a house on my tired shoulders.

" Suddenly I heard the baying of a hound in the distance. The sound, menacing as it was, aroused my flickering hopes. It would, if followed up, lead me out of the labyrinth in which I was weakly floundering. Again the deep baying sounded on the calm evening air, then, as if the whole of Hades had broken loose, it was succeeded by a chorus of such infernal barking and yelling as I had never heard before. The furious din checked my progress, I halted and listened. Would it be safe to proceed in that direction ? It would certainly not be safe to stay where I was, and the hubbub, threatening as it sounded, would at least lead me out of my perilous position—to land me in a worse one, perhaps. Well, I had come to the end of my tether and had no choice. I decided to ' face the music,' and pressed on in the direction of what seemed to be a pack of hounds let loose and hot on the track of their prey.

" Then, suddenly, I stopped dead once more, for the awful thought had occurred to me that I myself might be that ' prey,' the object of that clamorous quest. Even as I halted, I noticed that the jungle had grown less dense.

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Pressing forward, I emerged all at once into the bright sunshine and in view of a strange picture.

" In a clearing between jungle and jungle, an island of plain between two seas of forest, stood the most incongruous building it has ever been my lot to see—yes, actually, for this is not fiction, but absolute fact. Think of a mediæval tower cast out of England or Normandy into the midst of a Cingalese landscape ! On one side of it stood a long low building, evidently kennels, and issuing from this I beheld a pack of some twenty large hounds of a breed I was quite unable to place. No two of them were alike, and I judged them to be mongrels between the bloodhound and other large breeds, at least many of them had undoubted bloodhound characteristics. I have seen such dogs in the Portuguese towns of India, and I have reason to believe they had been brought from Pondicherry.

" Behind them stood a curious figure, a white man in striped pyjamas, the trousers of which were tucked into long, laced-up field-boots. He wore a solar topee, and at that distance I could not see his face. But I was not occupied at the moment with personal idiosyncrasies or appearances. The hounds, sighting me, gave full cry, and came at me like a speckled wave.

" ' Look out,' I yelled, raising my rifle, ' if your dogs attack me, I shall shoot—and it won't be at the dogs.'

" Their master heard, even at that distance, and snapped out an order. Instantly the brutes came to a stop, whimpering and whining like a horde of disappointed wolves. I walked slowly towards the man with the solar helmet, and now I could see his eyes—curious eyes they were, eager, strained and bloodshot, the restless eyes of a debauchee, it seemed to me.

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"'It's late for hunting,' I said, 'but your hounds have got me out of a fix. I was lost in the jungle.'

"'Several people have been lost there,' he replied in strange but cultivated tones, although with a strong foreign accent. 'That's why I bring the dogs out. They have . . . er . . . rescued not a few wanderers.'

"'That's a queer house of yours, if you'll excuse me for saying so.' I ventured. 'Quite like the ogre's castle in a fairy tale, isn't it?'

"'*Ogre's* castle,' he repeated. 'You think so? Well, you're all in, I expect. You had better come inside and lie down for a bit,' and turning and whistling to his dogs he led the way to the tower. Within, it was comfortable enough, and had evidently been made suitable to tropical conditions. The ground floor was the living-room, two airy bedrooms composed the second storey. As to the third, I only saw it once.

"I learned that my host's name was Kreimer, or so I shall style him. He was a heavy, cumbrous-looking man of an obviously lazy habit, about fifty perhaps, fleshy and unwholesome. His only servant was a Cingalese, a creature of quite extraordinary suavity.

"But I was in no case to quarrel with circumstances, and after an excellent supper of curry which might have been cooked in the best club in Calcutta, I was shown to my room and slept like a man in a legend. And while I slept I dreamed—nor were my dreams pleasant.

"They were rather chaotic and indescribable, those dreams of mine, but their central motif seemed to be a horrible unnerving sensation of constant rustling, to which the baying of the hounds played a menacing accompaniment. Rustle, rustle, the weird sound continued throughout the night, like the leaves of a windswept wood in June,

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and, even though I slept, I had a sensation of the nearness of bodiless presences which filled me with vague unrest. I awoke unrefreshed and almost as weary as I had been the night before, but I washed and dressed, and descending, put the best face on things I could. Kreimer was in the living-room, and what I saw him do I did not like.

"At first I thought he was drinking a glass of wine. But when I drew closer, I saw to my horror that it was not wine.

"'Good morning,' he said affably enough, as he finished his drink. 'You seem surprised at the nature of my refreshment, but it's doctor's orders.'

"'Indeed,' I said most inadequately, wishing myself for some instinctive reason a thousand miles away from this man.

"'Yes, I find fresh blood wonderful as a morning pick-me-up,' he continued almost carelessly. 'Ever tried it?'

"'Good gracious, no!' I retorted, suddenly angry, I knew not why.

"'But you drink milk, don't you?' he asked, as if surprised, 'and what is milk but white blood?'

"I made no reply, and we sat down to a breakfast of kedgeree and coffee, well served by his Cingalese man-servant. How it was I came to accept his invitation to stay for a week I cannot say. The man had a strange fascination about him, and I have always been strongly attracted by odd personalities.

"'This is a wonderful spot for cheetah,' he said, as he lit a cheroot. 'I course them with the hounds. Suppose we try our luck before tiffin? You won't need a gun, it's all dog-work. Better start at once while it's reasonably cool, if you don't mind.'

"He had touched me on one of my weak spots. Of

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course cheetah are not hunted that way at all, but I was keen to see a new method. So in ten minutes he had routed out the dogs, and was waiting for me at the door.

" ' By the way,' he said, looking at me strangely, ' the dogs aren't used to you, and I admit they're a trifle uncertain with strangers. Suppose you walk towards the jungle and watch the proceedings from cover. My man and I will drive them in the opposite direction, and as it's all flat country hereabouts you'll get a capital view of the sport when we rouse one of the spotted fellows. What do you say ? '

" I looked at the hounds, leaping, snapping and snarling, and he didn't have to ask me twice. So, while he and his man held them on the leash, I made for the wall of trees about a quarter of a mile away.

" I had gone, perhaps, a couple of hundred yards when I heard the yapping and whining change suddenly to the noise of a pack in full cry. Surprised that they had already roused a cheetah, I turned. The pack, with baying heads and tails high in air was rushing in my direction !

" For an instant I stood stock-still, incapable of believing that I was their quarry. But a second glance sufficed to make it certain. The brutes were running towards me as if possessed, and Kreimer was waving them on with halloos and hunting cries as a man might a pack of beagles. With a sudden oath of terrified anger, I put down my head and dashed in the direction of the jungle at top speed.

" Well for me was it that I was a sprinter in those days, and in good form. One stumble, one false step, and I should have been done for. I had more than two hundred yards to make, and the brutes were not more than half that distance behind me when my warning came. I ran like a man who feels death clutching at his windpipe,

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sobbing, cursing, in a surge of frightful anger. My heart rose in my throat and half smothered me like the grip of an enemy. By the time I made the sheltering trees I was all in, merely reduced to a smashed and crumpled pair of lungs, drawing like a broken bellows. With the last of my frenzied strength I shinned up a tree and stared down at the howling brindled demons below me, leaping and frothing like maddened wolves. In another two minutes Kreimer had come up.

"'A thousand apologies, my dear young man,' he shouted, 'the brutes got out of hand. I simply couldn't restrain them.'

"'You devil,' I sobbed, 'didn't I see you driving them on, you infernal murderer!'

"'You're mistaken, I assure you,' he said suavely, looking at me queerly, almost hungrily, none the less. 'I was shouting at them to keep them back.'

"'Tell your man to take them to the kennels,' I said, 'for I have something to say to you.'

"'Certainly, he'll take them back,' he replied with a great show of willingness, and gave the necessary orders. At a word the hounds, which seemed to be absolutely under the domination of the Cingalese, trotted away behind him to the kennels. When they were at a reasonable distance I descended and faced Kreimer. But I faced a man with a revolver in his hand.

"He might have bristled with revolvers, but I was instantly at his throat. Then a strange thing happened. As I seized him, he crumpled up like paper in my arms, and slipped to the ground. I fell heavily on the top of him. His white face stared into mine. I knew he was dead as I looked into the glazed eyes.

"The heart had given way suddenly like a broken piston.

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Horrified and shaken, I called loudly to the Cingalese. At the third cry he came running to me. He bent over the face of the dead.

" ' This is no marvel,' he said calmly. ' He was a bad man. The gods have slain him out of the sky. Maybe, some demon of the forest . . .' and he looked at me fearfully.

" ' Help me to carry him to the house,' I said, and without another word we bore the body back to that strange tower which it had so lately inhabited.

" ' Yes, he was a bad man,' babbled the Cingalese sententiously. ' He hunted other men. . . .'

" ' What are you telling me ? ' I gasped, overcome with horror. ' Do you mean to say the man was a. . . a. . . madman ? '

" ' No,' he replied gravely. ' He made me his slave and I had to obey. Strangers lost in the jungle came hither, he hunted them with his hounds, and then . . .'

" ' And then what ? ' I asked, but received no reply.

" The thing seemed incredible. Entering the house, I went through Kreimer's papers. The man was Russian, a landowner, from the Crimea. His diary showed that he had undergone the experience of a terrible famine. Perhaps that had . . . but such surmises are better left unwritten.

" I resolved to remain in the Castle until such time as some official came our way. Someone from the Woods and Forests Department would surely pay us a visit before long, I felt assured. I had nothing to fear. Kreimer had attempted my life and his death was due entirely to mishap, for I had scarce touched him. My conscience was clear. And, moreover, it was impossible to communicate with the authorities from that jungle-surrounded place.

" We buried Kreimer that evening in the compound,

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and I made up my mind to shoot every one of the hounds next morning. That night I slept not at all. I was conscious of the same rustling in my bedroom, a weird sound as of bodiless things moving in the darkness, so I rose and lit the lamp and smoked and read until dawn, when I fell at last into an uneasy dozing.

" And now comes the most dreadful part of my tale. How it happened, I do not presume to be able to say, but, after a few days, I had no inclination to quit Cain Castle, as I came to call the strange tower in which I found myself. At first it was something resembling curiosity which detained me there, that and a resolve to await the coming of someone in authority to whom I could relate the truth of what had happened to Kreimer. But, after a few days, I began to feel with growing horror and dismay that I was becoming attached to the place, that, indeed, it held a weird kind of fascination for me. I grew tolerant even of the hounds, and felt more than disinclined to destroy them. After all . . .

" It was on the fourth day, I believe, that I began to experience a new phase of this peculiar obsession, for that is the only word I can discover for it. The horror with which I regarded the place and everything connected with it had entirely disappeared, and I found that not only could I tolerate Cain Castle, but that I had even a relish for the tower and its surroundings. No longer did I dread the rustling noises in the darkness of the night. I felt, on the other hand, something almost companionable and friendly in it.

" My conscience seemed numbed and clouded. I began to feel as though my very personality were undergoing an alteration. I remember now with horror the ghastly change which crept over me in that accursed place, but at

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ROOF TOPS OF PESHAWAR CITY, AT THE MOUTH OF THE KHYBER PASS

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the time, if you will believe me, I experienced nothing of the nausea with which I now regard the unnatural metamorphosis which I saw gradually creeping over me, the new and vile character which invaded and enveloped my ego like a demoniac possession.

" It is difficult for you to realize the nature of the strange and occult influences native to that environment. Little by little the influence, the horror, grew upon me. Soon I was as a child in its grasp. I walked about like a man in a trance. The Cingalese saw the change and spoke warning words full of enigmatical meaning. He might as well have spoken to the walls around us. Some dark power immeasurably mightier than man had me in its grasp, soul and body. The baying of the hounds had become as music to me, and curiously enough, they now displayed no unfriendliness, but leapt with joy at their fences when I appeared, fawning on me and licking my hands.

" One cloudy morning, dark, hot, mercilessly tropical, with the threat of thunder in the air, I rose, duller than ever in mind, and conscious of a craving which I could not describe to myself, a horrible physical craving, a wild hunger which was yet not of the nature of ordinary hunger, for the excellent breakfast the Cingalese placed before me remained untasted, arousing only nausea. Like a beast I stalked about the house, mooning from window to window. Ha, what was that ! The hounds were baying wildly. Something within me, something unspeakably wild and savage, leapt tigerishly at the sound. I looked toward the jungle. A man in a white drill suit was staggering out of it, evidently in the same predicament as that in which I had found myself some ten days before. Then he seemed to disappear.

" I rushed upstairs to the top storey of the tower, the

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better to get a sight of him and his movements, springing up the crazy stone steps like a panther. A wild blood-lust possessed me, I experienced the over-powering joy and triumph that the greater beasts must feel at sight of their prey.

" Behind me the Cingalese cried and babbled.

" ' Sire, sire, go not up there,' he pleaded. ' There is something there . . . something unholy.'

" The upper storey of the tower consisted of two rooms. So far I had only entered that on the opposite side, a room full of books, guns and hunting tackle. That which looked toward the jungle was locked. Now, in a frenzy of passion, I threw myself upon it. The crazy lock parted, and I was propelled into the place with terrific force. Stumbling to the cob-webbed window, I gazed through it with distended eyes, panting like a tiger behind bars. Ah, now I caught sight of the little white figure once again !

" The hounds ! How they yelled ! My impulse was to descend and turn them loose, to hunt, to capture, and then . . . even now, after many years, I turn sick and faint at the bare recollection of the ghastly desire which filled me with a tempest of longing. To seize, to tear, to bite—yes to *bite*, rich and deep !

" Something rolled dismally at my feet—turned and rolled on the rotting boards. I looked down. A human skull circled slowly on its fleshless dome at my feet !

" Then revulsion, horror, loathing, descended on me like a quenching flood, burning out the fires of the abominable ardour I had felt. I knelt beside that grim relic, my face buried in my hands, quivering with shame and self-aversion, a spirit newly escaped from some awful pit and limbo of ancient devilry in which I had languished for days of half-realized abandonment. What had I nearly

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become? With a cry I gazed around me. The room was literally stacked with human bones, the horrid trophies which Kreimer, the man-demon, the cannibal, had garnered there as mementoes of his unspeakable orgies.

"Nearly beside myself, I rushed below, through the compound and towards the now recumbent figure at the verge of the jungle. I had scarcely run more quickly when pursued by the hell-hounds on the day of the unspeakable Kreimer's death. The Cingalese followed me. We raised the fallen form, but it was lifeless.

"Two days later I was myself on the road to civilization, accompanied by the Cingalese. But before I went, I loaded every rifle and revolver in the tower—and then I entered the kennels and did what I had to do there quickly and mercifully. When the last of the demon-dogs had yelped out its life, I turned to the tower. The Cingalese and I gathered all the dry timber on which we could lay hands, and heaping it in the lower storey, I set it alight. In a couple of hours nothing remained of the Castle but the blackened walls.

"When I returned to Colombo, I set inquiries on foot, and revealed the outline of the history of the place. It had been built by an eccentric Englishman of means in the early part of the nineteenth century, an astrologer, who had retired to that remote district so that he might the better devote himself to the study of his mysterious art free from disturbance or interference. For at least a generation it had lain vacant and practically ruined, until, some two years before the opening of my story, it had been found and renovated by Kreimer. The mysterious disappearance of explorers in such a country did not arouse any especial remark, as it was thought they had perished in the neighbouring jungle which possessed a particularly

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bad reputation as a wilderness easy to lose oneself in. At the same time it seems peculiar that the very considerable number of people who had gone amissing in that particular locality during Kreimer's tenancy of the accursed tower had not aroused suspicion."

When Charlie finished, I felt that I could not sleep. The very waves of the ocean seemed to be full of yelping, barking dogs. But he was asleep in no time. He needed it more.

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CHAPTER XIII

ENGLAND THROUGH EASTERN EYES

"SHOW us your hearts!" said an American tourist to his English guide in London the other day, as I sat in an hotel lounge on my return to this country. I shared in his request, for a visitor to England wishes to see not only the museums and art galleries here but also—what is much more important—that living, pulsating, picture of the English folk, which, at least to an Oriental, helped to form an idea almost Utopian about the English race. Candidly, I vainly endeavoured to tally my ideas about this country by walking through London streets. Beyond the fact that the high buildings overawed me and at times one felt like walking between mountains of stones, I failed to observe the real life of the people, till a kind friend advised me to go to the English country-side where I would see the people in their original setting, and then trek back to the heart of London. So I hied forth to a neighbouring village. I must have been in luck's way, for there the people were enjoying themselves at the local village fair. I was fascinated as I also joined in the fun.

"Lovely food, lovely food!" called the man offering to dole out pennyworths of eel set in jelly. A navvy near the booth recommended it to the passing women. Two youths after a dazing ride on the dragons of the round-abouts came to celebrate the spirit of the fair by quaffing

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two glasses of lemonade each. Ordinarily in the fair, one of them thought they authenticated the flavour of the drink by having lemons float in the liquid. But an elderly woman jeered from behind the counter, and advised them to go to the love birds and the gypsies.

Round the corner a man wearing a pyjama suit and a top hat sold three large boxes of chocolates for a shilling —broad red ribbons tied on the boxes looked worth more than the price asked—and would have us believe that precisely at that spot 330 years ago Queen Elizabeth had dined, a feast on which £700 was spent. He was imbued with that festive atmosphere, he added, hence his giving away the sweets practically for nothing.

Frequently a roar of the caged lioness attracted the attention of the children and their nervous parents too. Winding in and out of the gypsies' carts they trekked to the switch-backs and roundabouts all aglow with tiny lights of many colours. On the way to coconut shies, and the shooting gallery they could not resist, nor without parting with a few coppers, the number and dart-throwing chances. A beautiful silver bowl could be won by just lodging a penny there, or putting the ring on the broken spout of that china teapot. It all looked so easy.

Tons of toffee, thousands of cheap toys, stacks of peanuts were being bought and sold. The dreamy-eyed fortune-teller did a brisk trade. For a shilling one could have his fortune told up to his marriage ; beyond that, charges were higher. Golden lights blazingly called you to the circus, where children, struck at the sight of it all, forgot to suck their cornets. And their elder sisters stood agog with expectation between the parts. Richly caparisoned galloping horses were patronized by the young and

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old alike ; they went up and down, and as the machine gathered speed, little Horace sitting in front of his mother held more tightly to the nostrils of his fiery steed.

Then the tents and canvases, flags and pennants were rolled up, merry-makers had departed, hefty men were heaping coconuts on their donkey-carts, great wheels and shafts were piled on traction engines, noisy men were putting up the tarpaulin, gypsies playing mouth-organs leaped on the sideboards of their caravans and the cavalcade moved on. Oh ! what a pageant of history. Sadly I turned to solve the mystery that lurked in the heart of London, and found the life of the town hum round the bargain counter of a big drapery store.

There I was disillusioned about feminine gentleness. Coming down the basement steps I saw the microcosm of the shop world spread before me. Around a stack of silk remnants war was on between the participators. A slim and a stout one were working in double harness, so to speak ; the former wriggled her way to get to that piece marked two shillings and threepence a yard, whilst the latter impeded the progress of a rival.

At another counter the crowd was surging eight deep, some were thrusting their way through to where knitted frocks could be bought for a mere song. One or two successful ones, holding their bargains like personal and hard-won trophies aloft over the heads of other competitors, were pushing their way triumphantly to the assistant. In one corner of another counter a contest for the same jersey which unfortunately appealed to two customers, was proceeding silently, but with some heat. One held the sleeves, the other hung on to the lower part, then the first grabbed at one of the sleeves—a tug of war ensued—some remarks were exchanged, in the heat of the battle none noticed their

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challenging tone, the garment continued to stretch and then it refused to stretch any further—a sharp tear and the one combatant flung it to the other : " It is yours ! Take it," she said, and turned to find something else, and when doing so " incidentally " either tread on the pet corn of the other or managed to pull down her rival's umbrella in the hope that its composition handle might not survive a knock on the floor.

Nearby scores of young and old were trying on hats. The assistant had long given up endeavouring to help them. Small sizes were being pulled down over big heads. Felt stretches, they thought, but a fawn-coloured hat was so fondly handled by a bargain hunter that the grease of her fingers made a deep impression on its brim. It was cast on to the other side of the heap. Many girls and their mothers were fancying ties and looking at themselves in the adjustable mirrors, while their menfolk, noticeably the weaker sex here, fresh from the country and clad in their grey herring-bone suits, clicked their tackety boots as they gaped at the marvels of that ridiculously cheap miracle called wireless, and asked the boy assistant the way to sort their Brownie crystal sets which they bought only three years ago.

The warmth of the basement increased with each horde of bargainites as they bore down the steps ; some of them in black straw hats of large commodious crowns and brims well pulled down, arrived all ready for the fray, with shopping bags, suitably sized for such an occasion, if not the occasion. They were the sort, I was told, that plunged headlong in the heart of the throng. Not till their feverish activity had tired them did they retire from the scrum and resort to the refreshment counter. Here I saw the most parsimonious shopper forget her principle. Pushing her

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GALA FAIR AT SIMLA MARRIAGE-MARKET

WOULD-BE BRIDES AT SIMLA MARRIAGE-MARKET

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hat well back, she ordered ice-cream first, to cool her heated brow, so to speak, then sandwiches and tea to finish up. Refreshment had a soothing effect, it appeared to me, and the ladies talked freely and compared notes as to what Mrs. Such-and-Such said to her in the strictest confidence, and then about that minx of a shop girl with peroxide curls whose complexion could not be her own, or that one behind the trinket counter whom she saw in an expensive music hall seat. "But, oh!" she remembered, "my hubby," and added, pushing forward her hat, "he must be wondering what I am doing so long. You see," she enlightened her acquaintance, "they don't allow pipe smoking here, so he stops at the stair foot." She rose and went to meet her lord at the door, who mutely carried her bag of bargains home.

Yes! indeed the ways of the English are strange, but they are most fascinating; and thus I realized what it meant to see the heart of England.

But my most celebrated facet of study came to me when I had the honour to be presented to King George.

On being presented at His Majesty's Court, I learned three things. Firstly, that colour and pageantry do not reside only in the heart of Asia; secondly that King George has a breadth of knowledge almost equal to the greatest professor that I have met; and lastly, judging by the grandeur of it all, the British Empire is not falling down. No, not yet.

To qualify these ideas, take for an instance the thrill that I felt on receiving the Royal Command to present myself at Court. Beyond being magnificently printed, the Summons did not differ from other richer got-up invitation cards, as an average man might view it. But we Orientals see more than meets the eye. There was a world

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of virtue in those lines of print. The mighty command of a monarch was impressioned in those cold letters ; yes, the voice of the world's greatest empire throbbed and echoed therein, too.

In the days when old Moguls sat on the throne of Delhi, the receipt of such an invitation would be celebrated by the Khans of the hills by feasting and much rejoicing for weeks together. " So our lord might also see," would sing the village bard, " the radiant face of one on whom plays the shadow of Allah." Nor would the mantle of the Great Mogul fall unworthily upon King George.

Slowly as the day grew nearer the presentation, I felt nervous ; for it is peculiar with the wild instincts of the hillmen, that they would face a shower of bullets, and slash whatever is between them and the air with their tulwars quite nonchalantly, but when it comes to decorum, to a full-dressed-up-bedazzling court of a king, well, as you most expressively put it in your language, they are literally scared.

It was not due to the fact that I felt myself not possessed of sufficient polished manners to face the glitter of an English court ; but chiefly because I was measuring it with what I had experienced in other awe-ridden Oriental ceremonies, where your limbs might freeze, but you dare not move lest the king's gaze fixes you, and, " your head might part company with your shoulders mighty quickly," so to speak.

A long line of motor-cars was ours, as we were moving on inch by inch to the palace. Lumbering desert caravans would have made greater progress, I thought. There we sat inside a steaming-hot limousine staring at passers-by, merely inhaling each other's breath mixed as it was with scent and the strong smoke of expensive cigars.

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Tired of waiting, an old colonel, one of our companions, began to recount how he put the salt on a tiger's tail in Bengal jungles. The dowager next to me liked to listen to such stories, and every now and then would fondly say : " Any more thrilling experiences, Colonel ? Oh, it must be so lovely to be in hot Kashmir ! " She liked the gruff timbre of the colonel's voice, his throaty cough not a little.

A thin rain fell, then a shower ; later an intermittent dripping of water from the sky—a mournful, hesitating drip, in the manner of one drop now another after five minutes. Only occasionally did the haze clear up ; and beyond the tall chimneys it showed up the naked tenements of those who were not going to the reception. I could see an urchin dart out of his tenement doorway to an adjoining dairy with a cracked milk jug. He threw the penny playfully in the air all the way as he ran on. He was singing merrily.

Sickened by the long wait I gathered up my long flowing Eastern robe, tucked my astrakhan cap under my arm. Rain or no rain I proposed to walk up to the gate of the palace. The comely dowager could not dream of doing that, but her niece would not mind—her complexion was her own. I was fretting at the long wait, or was it the depressing weather, I did not know ; my heart craved to solve the mystery of the court that I had not seen. In another minute, at any rate, I was walking.

The hall where we sat waiting was already full to overflowing. Tapestries, paintings of kings, flags, crests and arms decorated the walls. My seat was next to an old country gentleman. He mercifully did not talk. His daughter was supplying the deficiency. Try as she might, she could not read my name on the card, as I held it

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awkwardly upside down. From my dress, she guessed, and said to one next to her, that I must either be an Eskimo prince or only a Polish general.

A tall, blond, aristocratic-looking gentleman flitted about trying to pacify the ladies. Their Majesties would soon be in the Throne Room, I heard him say. The young ladies sprayed their bouquets, the one just in front of me, felt every other minute that the feathers were not gripping her hair properly. My heart was still beating like a cheap alarm clock. I do not know who was sitting behind me, but his wife was insistent in telling him to put that monocle away if it would not stay in his eye.

Presently the rich melody of "God Save the King" struck upon our ears. It came floating through the long corridors from a room distantly placed. All were on their feet (except for a minute or so, when the country gentleman on my left was on mine). Their Majesties were in the Throne Room. In one long line we were moving on to their presence.

A hush had descended upon the gathering, a silence for royal respect. I could even hear my new shoes squeak. "Chaar . . . chaar," they spoke, filling the narrow passage till I felt like taking them off. Slowly we passed through an antechamber. Now I could hear the names of the people announced. A short interval followed, then another announcement.

At last came my turn. The country squire had bowed so magnificently as I tarried at the threshold. My card was taken from me by the officer on guard, and passed on to half a dozen dignataries further up to the throne, till it reached the hands of one just before the King. My name was pronounced absolutely correctly. I then advanced. A firm grasp of the King's hand had a magical effect on me.

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My nervousness was gone. A benign smile lit up the face of the Emperor. His handshake was not mechanical. It was deliberate, full of meaning. An honest colour that played upon his countenance was in keeping with that freshness and sincerity which characterize King George as a sailor. And being true to it, his naval uniform that day enlivened the atmosphere.

It was later at the garden party, however, that I was fortunate to have a closer approach to Their Majesties. Both the King and the Queen walked about amongst their guests, mixing and talking to everybody. Little clumps of people collected around them as they moved about so unconventionally. Then I saw His Majesty with a teacup in hand. He smoked as he talked to me.

He knew all about Afghanistan. He admired the people. He knew that the river Hammond had thrice changed its course in southern Afghanistan, he was interested in the Buddhist relics of Bamyan ; he knew, too, about the Topes of the Khyber Pass. What professor knows more ? His voice was mellow, a trifle hoarse maybe ; but it was, above all, his unconventionality that captivated me. He was so unlike a king, and yet so kingly.

Conversing with King George, in those sunlit vistas of the glorious lawns that afternoon, I felt for the first time that real greatness does not, and need not, shroud itself in mystery. And that if ever a man had the divine right of kings, this mighty monarch certainly had, for he rules over the hearts of the people. A greater realm was never founded.

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CHAPTER XIV

IS THE MIND OF ISLAM CHANGING?

AND now it is time to give one's conclusions regarding the changes which are uppermost on the face of Islam. They can be stated briefly.

I have concluded that a change might come upon the face of Islam, on its mind, never. The movements set up by the " Big Four " of present-day Islam are essentially of one origin, and must ultimately bring them to the realization of a Great Confederacy of Islam. Mustafa Kamal, Ibn Saud, Riza Shah and Nadir Shah, are no doubt evolving schemes on different lines according to their respective local conditions, nevertheless, they are Pan-Islamist unawares, the cohesion is never lost.

In Angora, the Ghazi is engaged on a tremendous experiment of blending the East with the West. The Turk has now a symbol, a military hero. He obeys the commands of Mustafa Kamal to discard the Fez, and to liberate the women with less concern than does a trooper wash his puttees in a camp on receiving an order from his Colonel. Being a soldier born he values victory, and bows to the will of one who brought it about.

But without a full examination of the subject of the Church Disestablishment in Turkey one cannot comprehend the movement set afoot in the world of Islam, which at first sight seems to usher in the question of Church against the State ; not only the State of Turkey, but also of a

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much larger " Kingdom of Islam " formed of many nations, with varying degrees of political and cultural attainments. The whole Muslim East more or less obeyed one law, or more truly speaking was swayed by the clergy in nearly every sphere of life.

Now this separation in the Church in Turkey that has bewildered the world of Islam on the one hand, and the internal Reforms that have amazed the Christian West on the other, are the two most considerable movements in the history of the Near and the Middle-East. Nationalist Turkey has supplanted Shara or the religious law by a code of Swiss law, has banished the traditional office of the Khilafat from Turkey, has allowed women to go unveiled, abolished the Fez as the national headgear, separated the State and the Church and finally she is alleged to have divorced Islam as the State religion. Now let us review these items, and see what has actually been done and why.

It is essential to review here first as to what extent the Turkish State was the true standard bearer of modern Islam, and as to what measure Mecca law was enforced there before ever the fact of Turkey's revolt from Islam can justifiably arise. This necessitates some recapitulation of history. The Turks first emerged in Muslim history as mere fighting elements, because they saw in Islam a system of laws that advocated chivalry and cleanliness. It was shorn of all novel methods of thought, and was one which was frankly evident to the senses. This religion they adopted in the beginning as the servants of the great Khilafas, but soon fought their way to the leadership of Islam, till the Muslim world looked to Constantinople for moral and material guidance. The Chief of the fighting forces of Turkey became the " Protector of the

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faithful," and priests of Turkish blood were installed as Shiekhul Islam, exercising an enormous power upon the people through their juris-consults, the Muftis and Qadis.

With this as the genesis of the matter we notice a system of political symbiosis grow in Turkey in the sense that autocratic Sultans strengthened their power and prestige with the aid of the Decrees of the Muslim Doctors of Law, and the Church increased its hold upon the masses in virtue of the fact that the Khans of the Turkish race lent their unqualified support to the hierarchy of the clergy. But in spite of the fact that frequent clashes occurred between what the Sultan as the Chief of the State willed and that expressly laid down by the former practices of Islamic jurisprudence, it was never found difficult to explain away matters in the light that as the Door of Interpretation was open the Chief of the fighting clan of Turkey was qualified to legislate in the manner best suited to political circumstances. The historical actions of Sultan Suleiman is a case in point, who the precedence of earlier Khilafas notwithstanding, granted not only rights of settlements to foreign merchants, but a measure of extraterritoriality. The Doctors of the Law being loyal to the throne, set their Seal upon that enactment by attesting that the step approximated to the theory of Aman or protection which Islam grants to the peaceful tradesmen irrespective of colour and faith.

Thus matters had been allowed to exist, the clergy lending strength to the State and vice versa ; and for a considerable time the scales of power in the country were pretty nearly balanced. But even although the process appeared to go smoothly, it was so only superficially ; for the secret history of Turkey is replete with instances to show that the Church and the State were real rivals,

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A SNAKE-CHARMER AT AN INDIAN VILLAGE INN

A HILL WOMAN AT A SIMLA FAIR

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each working for the complete control of the power. Suspicion lurked all the time in each mind.

The masses in Turkey, of course, neither knew of nor cared for the conflict that was going on. They, unlike the Arab, had no time for logical subtlety, but behaving as pure and simple soldiers with an unshakable confidence in the command of their Chief at the spot, interested themselves with the art of war, glorying only in battle, accepted the white-beturbaned Mullah in the light of priests who wished them to lay down their lives and " walk in the path of the righteous " ; in short who helped morally in war.

Presently the Doctors of the Law devised a scheme for placing a ban upon every endeavour that calculated to probe into the sacred Injunctions of Islam. And although the Turk was not really inclined to seek any interpretation for himself, nevertheless the religious ignorance of the masses increased to the extent that the real word of Allah was entirely wrapped in priest-made dogma. Concurrently with this the clergy exerted themselves to the preaching of war so earnestly that the Sultans could scarcely do without the help of the Church whenever a danger to the State occurred ; till the thraldom of the Hoja or the priest was unquestioned in the realm. They could make kings and as easily dethrone them, or without the slightest provocation precipitate a revolution.

Then we come to the seventeenth century when the Turkish power began to decline, and in the following two centuries, what with the defeat of the Turks by Austria and Russia and what with the revolt of Egypt and the ultimate grant of reforms in 1856, the Church in Turkey has assumed a prodigious importance over the State because Sultan Majid had to throw himself on the mercy of the

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Clergy in order to retain his position in the Muslim world on account of his surrender to victorious Russia in matters of Criminal and Commercial Reforms so utterly alien to the Revealed Law of Islam. Here again the Doctors of Law qualified the situation by saying that the Sultan's actions were dictated solely by reason of legitimate diplomacy, and by thus lending their support conversely added further to their power. Gradually the influence of the Clergy became the only influence in the country. With the masses in ignorance, a weak State and armed with the power to excommunicate anybody who dared to challenge their decrees, the thraldom of the Church in Turkey was complete. All progress was made impossible, and pure fanaticism was bred. When subject races were oppressed, and corruption reigned supreme in the Turkish State, it was so, let it be made quite clear here, not because the Sultans were incapable, but chiefly for the reason that they were practically the slaves of the Clergy—Clergy with no skill in statecraft. Furthermore, they had entirely changed the true colour of Islam in so far as the Prophet gave a clear permission for Interpretation of the Revealed Law, whereas the official theological order of Turkey had contained : " If a verse of Scripture or a saying of the Prophet seems to stand in contradiction with the doctrine taught by the Doctors of the Law, it must be considered as a case of abrogation or interpretation not that a text had been overlooked. Consequently, the doctrine of the Doctors of the Law was to be followed in preference to the text of the Law." To act otherwise was heresy, often punishable by death, and thus the entire power was usurped by old-fashioned priests of Stamboul.

The belief in opportunism which characterized the attitude of the Clergy is further shown by the fact that in

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the national agitation which culminated in the Turkish Revolution of 1908 against Sultan Abdul Hamid, the priests were the only power which assisted the Sultan to quell the upheaval by wholesale massacre of officials and the Nationalists. They had declared that the Reformists were not true Muslims. In the following year when Abdul Hamid was deposed, the head of the Church joined issue with the stronger party and gave the Religious decree that his former friend, the Sultan whom he had aided, was unworthy and should be deposed. At the outbreak of the War the Sheikhul Islam raised a futile cry of Holy War.

This duplicity continued, and when Ghazi Mustafa Kamal Pasha organized the Nationalist forces in Anatolia at the behest of the Sultan, an edict was issued for the extermination of the Nationalists who were styled as the "Rebels of Islam." The struggle between the last Khalifa and the Angora Government was largely flamed by the Doctors of Law, and the recent Kurdish revolt which very nearly overthrew the Nationalist Government was directly traced to the machinations of these members of the Clergy.

With this plethora of intrigue before the Turks the only course that lay before the Angora Nationalist was to destroy that nefarious organisation which had not only impeded the progress, but had actually imperilled the very existence of Turkey as a nation. The Clergy worked against and for the Sultans as it suited their own scheme of self-aggrandisement, as they did with the Nationalists; but Mustafa Kamal Pasha, whose merits equal his reputation, never flumbered in discovering in the priesthood a very real menace to the future of his country. And so the whole structure, burdened with the clerical heaviness of centuries, had to be dismantled.

To view the whole prospect in this light is to view it

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correctly. There is no revolt against Islam in Turkey, it is a reaction against that unspeakable intrigue of the Ullamas that would have deprived Turkey even of the merest semblance of national existence if it were allowed to remain in the land. Culturally the purest form of Islam is to be seen everywhere in Anatolia. One needs to go only a hundred yards up the hill on which Angora is built to notice Islam existing in all its glory despite occidentally dressed men and unveiled women. In Konia, which lies in the heart of Old Turkey, you would notice Islam writ large over the ploughboy's face as also over the countenance of the manager of the modern hotel, dressed in best European style. Squalor, filth, there is none, nor quarrelling, drunkenness or dancing the can-can of which later I saw plenty in Beyreuth.

The heavy tapestry of dogma and Mullah—intrigue which had cast a gloom over the young and old in Turkey for generations—having gone, I hope never to return—the modern Turk is embarking on a new experiment, that of reclaiming his lost heritage of greatness. The real truth about this experiment came to me on another journey to Anatolia at Hyder Pasha railway station when the Angora train was ready to start from Constantinople southwards. I was still busy with ablution for my prayer. " The train will not wait," shouted a gruff-voiced officer to me, " till you finish your washing ! " Although people had gathered around me, I paid no attention to the remark. " Oh, well," he said, " perhaps you can fly to Angora on this old magic carpet on which you sit."

Next morning in Angora I was surprised to see the same officer praying in the train with me ; and he apologetically observed that his behaviour of the previous night was in keeping with a desire to show to the people that

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nothing of the draggletail style of the Sultans would be tolerated and that time was of value; furthermore, the clergy of old Stamboul who stifled their national aspirations so long can be made to lose their hold upon popular imagination through nothing less than a ruthless war against them. "For the rest," he added proudly, "we are the wrong people to renounce a faith for which our forebears have bled." No soldier community forgets its sacrifices.

The lattice-windowed houses of old Angora still linger under the ruined walls of Timur, but what a change in the parched valley below. The thud of the cement machine is heard at every turn, huge cranes are everywhere, while far below stretch houses, offices, banks and foreign embassies. "Everybody must work here," said a Turkish deputy to me, "and keep on working," depositing his European felt hat at the door and using a skull cap. Later he prayed with me at the Kara Oghland mosque.

In place of the Chanting Dervishes in Konia, I heard the Turkish girls sing both the religious and national songs when in procession they marched past the shrines of the Great Sufi. But liberty has its limits, for although I saw unveiled women and occidentally dressed men, the Brusa Missionaries complained about restrictions in evangelising young girls. "You talk of liberty," remarked one of the enthusiastic members of that Mission, "these Turkish girls do not marry a Christian yet. Where is the liberty?" I laughed and said that the face of Islam might change, its mind never.

In direct contrast to this sits the great Wahabi Ibn Saud surrounded by his zealots of the desert. He holds the keys of the Shrines of Islam. By organizing one of the biggest Akhwan movements in Arab history and giving the scattered nomads a racial feeling, in his efforts at tribal

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unity—a cohesion where nature is at war with man—he is attempting a task fit for a Titan ; but his austere preaching of that version of Islam that rids the faith of all its dogmatic trappings has fired the imagination of his desert warriors. " In the name of Allah I defend His House," I heard him say near Mecca. " Say which of you is not with me ! " The sun-baked rocks of Mecca echoed and re-echoed when they waved their black banners. " We are all with thee, ya, Aziz," they shouted in response. But the Wahabi allows modern methods, and means to penetrate the wild wastes of Arabia ; for these are God's gifts, he thinks, which can be harnessed to the cause of a great renaissance of Islam. He even believes in having dealings with the " infidels," as hatred for another man's religion was not taught by the Prophet of Mecca, yet his mind is radically different from the Turkish mind : being an Arab and a dweller in the Cradle of Islam, he feels the spiritual responsibility of the Muslim world and wishes to acquit himself favourably in the eyes of his co-religionists by giving a good account of the manner in which he makes the future of his countrymen a model of worthy endeavour. Ibn Saud suffers with no such unfortunate precedence of Mullah-ridden Sultans as did the Turks ; but like them he strives in his local sphere towards that great goal the Confederacy of Al-Islam.

The momentum which the Akhwan movement has gathered under the able leadership of Sultan Ibn Saud, coupled with the recent friendly meetings of the representatives of Nejd, Hijaz and Iraq, opened out a new avenue of thought for my investigation to see what shape national impulses were taking in Arabia. Inasmuch as the subject is interwoven with the earlier Turko-Arab difficulties, and the Turks at the time held the standard of Islam,

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the discussion of that facet of the desert policy can justifiably knit in the narrative here.

The evolution of political events which destroyed the unity of Arabia has been the story of the last quarter of a century of Islamic history, but the process of this evolution, despite growing Arab political literature, still remains the enigma of the desert. To the Western world the movement was familiarized by that very sensational title, the "Revolt of Arabia," and as such it continues to linger in the imagination of the British people to this day. The advocates of the Arab cause, however, sharply challenge the allegation of a revolt; for they ask with considerable justice, "our revolt against whom?" True, voices in reply have been raised from different corners of the world when it was stated that it was a revolt against Turkey, a revolt against Islam, and revolt against the Eastern traditions of the past.

Now, a fact known to a very limited number of living diplomats is, that when the Committee of Union and Progress dethroned Sultan Abdul Hamid one of the principal "election promises" of theirs was the grant of self-government to the Arab nation. This was necessary because the Arab educational and economic advancement during the last two decades was so rapid that the signs of pride in Arab nationalism began to manifest themselves very clearly much prior to King Hussain's historical declaration of the Arab Independence in 1916. In a measure it was accentuated both by the European impact and the Turkish cry of Pan-Turanianism, for during the reign of Sultan Mohamed Khamis the flame of Pan-Islamism had all but ceased to glow.

Whether it was due to the ever-changing character of the Turkish politics on the downfall of Sultanic autocracy,

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or that the Sublime Porte continued to believe in the right of conquest, the fact remains that the pledges given to the Arabs by Enver Pasha and his colleagues were never redeemed. The Arab agitation grew apace till it hardened into a definite national claim for complete autonomy ; and thanks to the surging spirit of Pan-Turanianism, which cut so deeply into Arab sentiments, that even the religious influence for keeping the sons of the desert within the Turkish Imperial fold had lost its appeal ; and it is just here that real Islam differs very fundamentally from any other conception of religion or creed ; for nationality counted for nothing in Islam : all are brothers, black or brown or white, all servants of a great world-wide confederacy of Al-Islam, not Turks, Indians, and Persians. When once this feeling is gone the national cry of the Arab is as laudable as that of the Turk : and it is precisely this reason which completely vindicates the House of King Hussain.

When every evidence of an Arab renaissance was unmistakable, surely Turkey committed a great blunder during the War by not granting self-government to the Hijaz and thus losing a powerful ally to her cause in Arabia ; for actually at the turning of the tide for Turkish arms Jamal Pasha, the then Governor in Syria, would not hear of giving the leadership of Arabia to King Hussain. In place of coaxing the " reactionary desert chieftain " of Mecca to submission and loyalty, he aggravated the difficulty by telegraphing : " If the war came to a victorious conclusion, who could prevent the Government from dealing with you with the greatest severity when it is over ? " He behaved like one of those strange enthusiasts one sees that follow imperialistic instincts even to the doom of their nation. Then King Hussain showed himself in

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PAHARI WOMEN IN GALA DRESS IN NORTH INDIA

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his true colours. His whole nature reacted so passionately and spontaneously, and with such thrills the like of which has not been known in the desert history of our times. The battle which the Arabs fought and won should be called a War of Independence rather than a revolt : and, of course, whether they got that unqualified independence for which they leaped into the arena is, as Kipling would put it, quite another story. Meanwhile ever glowing, ever haunting are the visions of an Arab Empire before the eyes of King Hussain.

During the period between 1916 and 1926, conditions in Arabia were so shaken up, like the fragments in a kaleidoscope, ever changing into new shapes and bewildering forms, that affairs there became highly complicated ; and barring a few students of high policy in Asia the average man looked upon them as select and uninviting. The only comprehensible facts are that after a barren dispute the rival Arab Chiefs had settled down to ruling Iraq, Transjordania, Yamen, and the Hijaz ; and that Great Britain, France, and to a lesser degree Italy, have now decided interests to keep the rivalries of the Arab people in control because of their mandatory commitments in Palestine and Syria. But no sooner was the Sharifian-Wahabi warfare over than the whole world of Islam was stirred by the excesses which Nejd zealots are alleged to have committed on their victorious march on Mecca. The Grand Muslim Conference of 1926 was unsuccessful in soothing the irritation of the faithful against the Wahabi Guardianship of the Holy Places of Islam. Storms of protest brew both in India and Egypt ; the Wahabis called everybody else an impious Muslim, the rest styled Sultan Ibn Saud as an irreconcilable puritan ; the future political issue of the Hijaz was in great doubt, the country stood like

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a man in a fog, uncertain of the path, puzzled by the confusion of ideas and half disposed to give up the venture; for King Ali still held Jeddah. But King Ali, whom I met frequently at Baghdad, is not a man to be the King of the Bedouins, who dwell in the desert provisionally and erratically. He is a saint, and saints do not make good kings. His Sharifian personality clings to him like a beautiful odour. Like his scholarly brother, King Abdullah, he left the throne of his fathers to the more virile desert warriors of Nejd. But what souls these men have! The writer well remembers sitting in the palace at Aman.

"You ask of my sentiments about Ibn Saud?" said Amir Abdullah. "We are a very maligned family, but for my own part I say that, in spite of the fact that Ibn Saud did not act in a friendly way towards us, and flung us out of our houses one by one, we wish him well, for he protects Allah's house as a strong man should, and in the name of Islam we hope no harm will come to him."

He spoke with such emotion that one was profoundly moved.

For purely Islamic interests the rival Arab kings can still meet if side issues like the raid of Feisal Al Dawish on Iraq were averted in good time. There are, of course, those who believe that he was far too strong a personality for Ibn Saud to punish, indeed the leadership of the Akhwans was said to be entirely in the hands of Feisal Al Dawish, and it is sometimes stated that when due to the sinking strength of the Sharifian dynasty an opportunity fluttered in the way of Ibn Saud, it was the delicate handling of Feisal Al Dawish which made it possible for the Wahabi King to get control of the Akhwans for the victory of Mecca. Whatever the case may be, the writer, who has made a close study of these questions on the spot, for one

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refuses to believe that the unity of Arabia is a forlorn hope. It cannot be a union under one King, rather a confederacy of independent kingdoms all working for the greatness and solidarity of the Arab race, never forgetting that they are the guardians of the cradle of a religion to which one-seventh of the human race still bows its head five times a day, and thereby solving the mystery of an Arab complex which has lain buried in the heart of Old Asia so long.

No story of present-day Islam would be complete without detailing the conditions obtaining in Persia and Afghanistan. Here as in Turkey and Arabia that single-minded effort which characterizes the task of their Kings is a main feature. Both Riza Shah and Nadir Shah are following in the wake of Turkey but modify the conditions according to their localities. Both, like the Angora Nationalists, realize that the oncoming of the Western economic pressure is to be challenged by means of ordered evolution and not necessarily through wholesale adoption of European methods.

Matters in Afghanistan had been drawing much attention of late, and not till pools of blood have been shed in my country, is peace now established there. The recent arrival of the British Minister at Kabul, with the ratification of the Anglo-Afghan treaty of friendship as announced by Mr. Henderson a short time ago in the House of Commons, strengthened the minds of all who wish for the continuation of good relations between two countries which have the best reasons to be friends. But behind all this lies a chapter of Afghan tragedy which I now reveal for the first time, with a view to helping in the right understanding of contemporary diplomacy of the Middle East. It is not due to the Westernizing efforts of Amanullah alone that Afghanistan was plunged into chaos. This was

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only a contributory cause ; the real meaning lay much deeper. By a just comprehension of these facets alone, which I shall review presently, it is possible to follow the present tendencies of King Nadir Shah's peaceful reign.

Almost within a fortnight of his arrival in Afghanistan from his European tour, Amanullah had shown himself determined to replace the old order by the new. What was, everywhere else, in the experimental stage so far, was to become for his country an established future programme.

The significant fact which emerges from the introduction of new institutions by King Amanullah is that in Afghanistan the foreign graft never flourishes. Around this basic idea cling practically all disturbances that have arisen throughout the chequered history of that country. The minds of the Afghans are cast in a totally different mould from that of the Turks, and from that of their next-door neighbours, the Persians. Our geographical, political and economic conditions have, throughout the ages, tended to make us conservative, even to the point of fanaticism. We have all along stuck tenaciously to our old ways of thinking and to our " backward " manner of living, if you like to call it so, and whoever has disturbed these has irritated us into revolution. Both the father and the grandfather of King Amanullah held the respect and loyalty of the people because they knew well the type of people over whom they were ruling. Amanullah himself had his fingers burned when his introduction of new laws provoked the Khost uprising some five years ago, and the rebellion quietened down only when he recalled the anti-Afghan reforms.

His endeavour to break down the barriers which exist in Afghanistan in the social intercourse between men and women need not be discussed here. Nothing is wholly good or wholly bad. What may be considered a social evil

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by one nation might be a very desirable thing for another. But these are innovations to the Afghans, and the people cannot be expected to adopt them with no more justification than that they are the ways of the progressive West ; for environment is, after all, the sole factor which dictates the type that will remain in possession of the imagination of a given people : also, he had forgotten that if a different mode of civilization were to be introduced into Afghanistan, then a foreign culture should be grown first ; for civilization must necessarily be an inevitable destiny of culture and the man who could implant an exotic culture in Afghanistan remains unborn

Whereas these modernization efforts of Amanullah were made to grip the imaginations of the people, the admiration of it was severely circumscribed to the town folk and a few court hangers-on. The peasant was bearing the burden of extra taxation to build new towns, cinemas or racecourse stands. Of these " improvements," of course, the farmer saw no direct use to himself ; and perhaps he would have continued to bear this constant demand of the government at Kabul if the officials, both at the central administration and in the provinces, had refrained from plunging their hands too deeply into the peasants' pockets.

The tragedy of the case is, that the ex-King was never told of these very real weaknesses of his administration. Some people now say that Amanullah at that period of his power, being inebriated with his own ideas, would not have believed the reports of the dry-rot which had set in in his government. It is certain, however, that he was not fully informed of the danger to which the situation was drifting. It is no doubt also true, that whosoever dared to disagree with the accepted atmosphere of the paltroon-ridden court was soon out of favour with the monarch.

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Towards the beginning of the final collapse of King Amanullah's regime, the young party of the Afghans had come into power ; and almost without exception its members were those men who had drunk deeply at the very worst fountains of the gay capitals of Europe. From this stock sprang ministers, governors and military commanders, giving support to the most dangerous policy, oblivious of the consequences. Most of the elders who had any restraining influence were removed, and there were then many ways of " removing " a man in Afghanistan.

The removal of the aristocracy of the country from active service, the uneasiness of the peasantry on account of heavy taxation, the irregularity in the payment of the soldiers, assisted by the insults inflicted upon the priesthood, produced a very dangerous combination for Amanullah's government. Not that this menace remained unnoticeable to the acute observations of the Young party at Kabul, but careful plans were laid to stifle the merest flicker of opposition. In many cases where open prosecutions were not possible, deliberate efforts were made to throw the odium of bad faith upon perfectly loyal and patriotic Afghans by stigmatizing them as pro-foreign and more especially pro-British, and hence anti-Afghan. The absurdity of the situation can be gauged when at one time even the present Afghan King was styled as being against his own country because he disapproved of Amanullah's methods. The rest of the story of the revolt is well known.

Every right-thinking Afghan is glad that Nadir Shah has accepted the throne of Kabul. He is one of the few men who shun all publicity and self-aggrandisement ; his self-sacrifice was evident from the fact that, after driving the water carrier's son out of the capital, and when the whole country lay at his feet, he offered the crown to

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Amanullah subject to certain conditions. Does not this give ample proof that he fought for the people and not for himself? And the people, knowing it, insisted upon his mounting the throne.

Now, this new king is not an unknown quantity, for ever since he was an exile in India with his father, competent observers had marked him down as a man of destiny. He is no more than forty-nine years of age, and yet the amount of creditable work which he has been able to crowd into his life is amazing. Long before he became the commander-in-chief of the Afghan forces, and latterly, the Afghan minister in Paris, the people regarded him as *the* man in the country. Soon, his enormous prestige excited the jealousy of court hangers-on, and even Amanullah thought his position imperilled by the growing popularity of General Nadir Khan. This alone explains his voluntary exile in France.

Nadir Shah is a man of few words. His politeness is proverbial; and his love of Arabic scholarship was the envy of even the poet—Mahmoud Tarzi. He has always tried to engender a feeling of good-fellowship amongst his people. This fact of his character is extremely important because he advocated it in the face of the total lack of that spirit during King Amanullah's regime. The greatest pride of the favourites of the ex-King was to run down the foreigners, especially the British subjects; but of all these prejudices King Nadir is singularly free.

He encourages education on the right lines, that is, he wishes his people to remain essentially Afghan, but to learn from foreign sources only such things as will benefit the country; and above all he is careful to strain the draught of foreign ideas through the muslin-mesh of true Afghan traditions. He is not the man to tolerate either

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the frivolity of Amanullah's days, or the thraldom of the priests, which was ushered in by the water-carrier's son. In the main, his policy is one of peace and order, and I look forward with confidence to a happy future for the internal and external affairs of the country ; and in that policy the British Empire would find a sure bulwark against all the forces of disruption that are working in and around India.

Since Central Asian Khanates, which formed the cradle of Islamic culture for some centuries, is passing through newer times, the conditions there have potentialities for considerable magnitude for the world of Islam, and as regarding the Uzbeks and other nationalities where so little is known, a mention here is not without interest.

A general awakening perceptible amongst the Muslims in Russia to-day proves the contention that had the Czars outgrown the periods of barbaric methods of their rule, if not their barbaric instincts, then the history of Central Asia would have been different. Tyranny in all its unseemly forms was the sole policy of Imperial Russia, for a general plan of Russification was taken in hand, which included the imposition by force of the use of Russian as the " national language." The Muslims of Azarbaijan, like the Poles, revolted against the measure, and consequently became an especial object of Czarist thraldom. No Turkish literature was permitted to enter the Caucasus, rigid passport regulations were imposed to ensure separation of the Central Asians and the Turks. Sultan Abdul Hamid refused to see the rising tide of Pan-Turanianism, or perhaps perceiving a personal danger in it, willingly closed his eyes to the Russian excesses. That period marks a definite birth of Pan-Turanianism, for the enlightened Russian Muslims groaned under the Czars and in Turkey storm was brewing against

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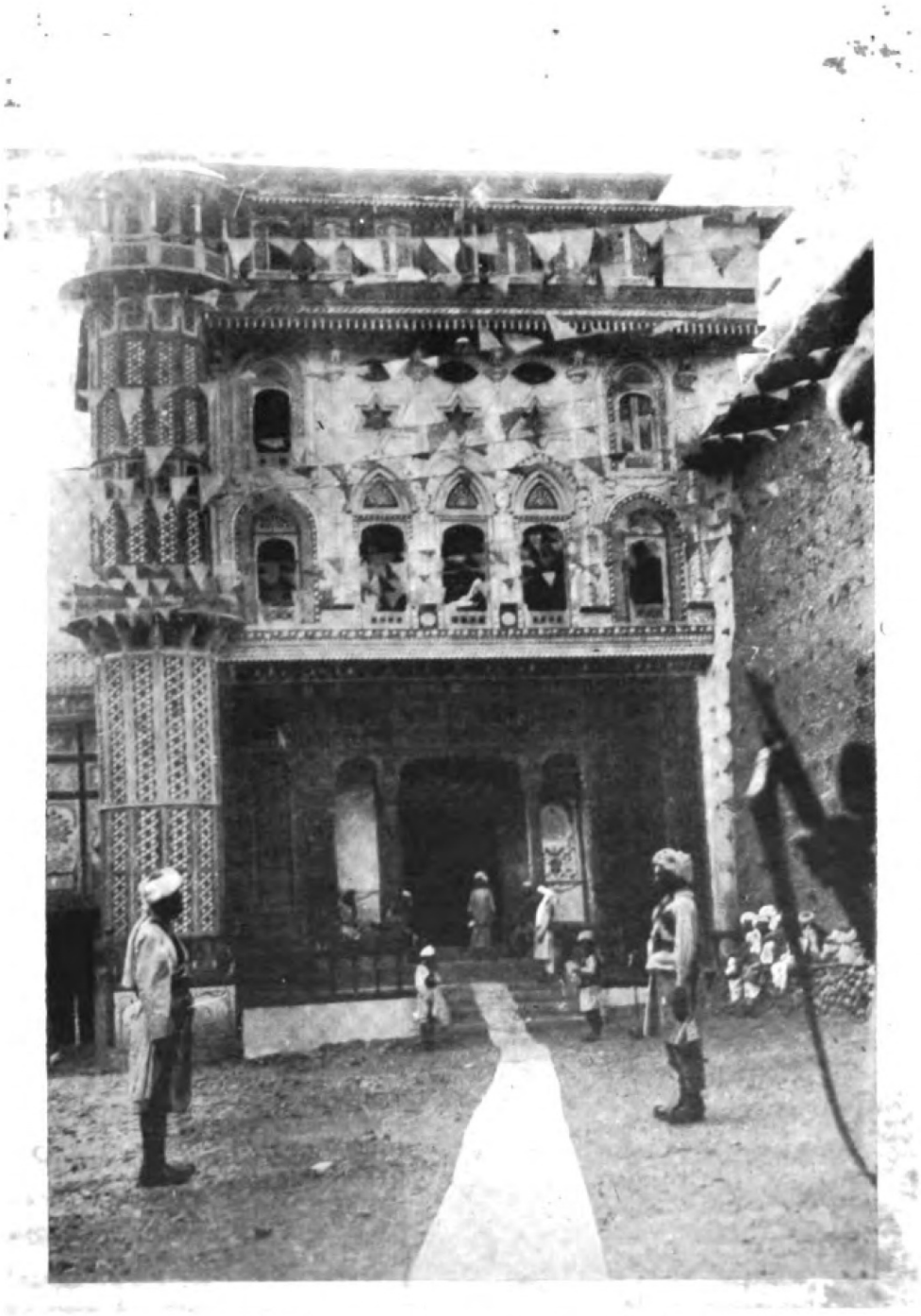

A CHIEFTAIN'S HOUSE ON THE AFGHAN FRONTIER]

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Abdul Hamid. The two parties joined hands much earlier than is generally known.

At the fall of the Sultan the Central Asians took heart and their communal urge was reflected by a rising in Andijan. When the revolt was ruthlessly put down, Mufti Alamjan, Ismail Ghazanfriski, Hasen Zade, and Shafiqa Khanum continued the movement till the Czar's minions, endeavouring to stifle Pan-Turanianism, invaded the domain of religion by not recognizing the Muftis appointed by the Shiekhul Islam and replaced them by slavish vendors of religious degrees trained at St. Petersburg. A struggle continued between the Czar and his Muslim subjects till, after a considerable number of Azarbaijanians, Uzbeks and Turkomans had been exiled to Siberia, in 1906 the first Muslim benevolent society was permitted to be organized in Baku and the first Muslim University to be opened in Kazan. Mufti Alamjan, the soul of this political resurrection of the Russian Muslims had, however, become a marked man. He was arrested and interned in Volgodsky in Northern Russia, and after his release was not permitted to return to his native country, but forced to live a retired life in Turkey till 1911 when he organized the international Turkish Club, "Turk Ojaghi" (the Turkish hearth) and started a newspaper entitled "Turk Yurdon" (the Turkish family circle).

Strengthened by the rise of the Committee of the Union and Progress in Turkey the Russian Muslims of Caucasia and Volga claimed consideration of their Government. Educational activities manifested themselves on strictly national lines; they shunned the state controlled Universities of Imperial Russia. A large number of journals in Persian, Turkish and Russian were published by them, and "Achigzess" of Baku became an uncompromising

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champion of Turanianism which linked the destiny of Russian Muslims with other races professing the religion of the Prophet. In addition to Kazan College, excellent educational centres for the Muslims were created at Baku and Simfropol.

But by far the greatest momentum that this Pan-Turanian and Pan-Islamic movement of the Central Asian Muslims received dates from the Red Revolution of 1917. The new Government proclaimed its policy of freedom for all those states that groaned under the yoke of Imperialist Russia. It sent a thrill throughout Islamic East, but it was destined to be short-lived, for the Soviet Government made one great blunder from which it can never hope to recover. It retained the officials of the old regime in power and they were not favourably disposed to Islam or Turanianism. They considered that "it is to Russia that God had bestowed the privilege of enlightening Asia." Withal the people were able to have the Tartar claims recognized inasmuch as the political indentity of the following was fully acknowledged :

The Independence of the Kerghiz Republic ; Membership of the Federation granted to Daghistan Republic, North Caucasian Republic, Abhkazia, Tataristan ; the Independence of Bashkird Republic, Turkestan Republic, Bokhara Republic, Khiva Republic, and Crimea Republic.

The three most important republics are those of Azarbaijan, Crimea and Bokhara. The first-named has a parliament of 120 members and maintains an army of no less than 10,000 Azarbaijanians. In the case of Crimea a treaty of 24 Articles exists between the Soviet Government and the Crimeans, chief items of interest in it being : Turkish as the Court language, inclusion of a Tartar personnel in the Russian Fleet in the Black Sea, a consti-

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tution of a Tartar army, and allocation of no less than 100 seats in the Moscow University for Crimean students. Whilst in Bokhara the people elect a Chamber of 85 members, constituting an executive committee, out of which by a further election from this body a Supreme Council of seven governs the country. The president of this Council is both Prime Minister and President of the Republic.

But the most significant and far-reaching feature of this awakening in Muslim Russia is the part which the women have played and are playing in this movement. Women's committees were constituted in Azarbaijan, Daghistan, and in Crimea with its headquarters at Simfropol; the "committee of self-help" controls hundreds of educational and even political institutions in Eastern and Western Russia. With it the names of Shafiqa, Ghazanfrisiki Khanum, Aisha Ishkova Khanum, Dilara Bulgakova Khanum and others are closely associated. The Kouraltai of Crimea has given franchise to women. The Baku Oriental Conference reaffirmed women's rights to participate in social and political work and admitted 55 women workers to the membership of its Central Bureau.

Lying as Central Asia does on the fringes of the Russian State, it is that part of the Middle East where Bolshevism having been imposed upon the people, has set the All-Islam a-thinking where the Muslim world could or would be Bolshevized. Will the East gradually succumb to the influence of Moscow? There are, at present, signs and portents which make it seem not improbable that unless prompt steps are taken to counteract the propensities of the U.S.S.R., those states which are contiguous to her borders may be compelled for their own safety to adopt the Bolshevik regime. The old Tartar and other principalities which were absorbed by Tzarist Russia as has been shown

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have long ago been completely Bolshevized. They have, indeed, Soviets of their own, as has been shown, and some feel the danger that they may act as " feeders " to their independent neighbours, spreading the doctrines of Moscow within their territories and aiding the entrance of those trained emissaries from the Oriental College at Moscow whom the Government of India is taking steps to banish from its sphere.

But if there are many reasons why the Muslim East may accept the Bolshevistic doctrine, those why they are unlikely to are equally cogent. In the first place, the whole philosophy of Leninism is as foreign to the spirit of Asian thought as is Mormonism to the idiosyncrasy of the home countries. Not only is the idea of kingship fixed and almost ineradicably founded in the Eastern mind, but the Leninist notions of equality commend themselves about as much to the higher castes of India, Burma and China as the wild theories of Marat and Robespierre did to the *haute noblesse* of the France of the Revolution.

And it must be remembered that caste in European Russia and in the East are two very different quantities. In Europe it is purely a social thing, whereas in many parts of the East it has a religious implication. Ask a true-born Arab what he thinks of Bolshevism and you will get probably much the same reply as you would from the " average " English clubman. It is, indeed, deep calling to deep. But whereas your clubman will probably have only the social and proprietorial aspects in mind, a Muslim is thinking in terms of the eternal verities.

A great deal is written and spoken about Bolshevistic influence in the Muslim Chinese revolution. There is not the least doubt that it has been at work there, just as it was in the case of the Irish rebellion. But in the end it

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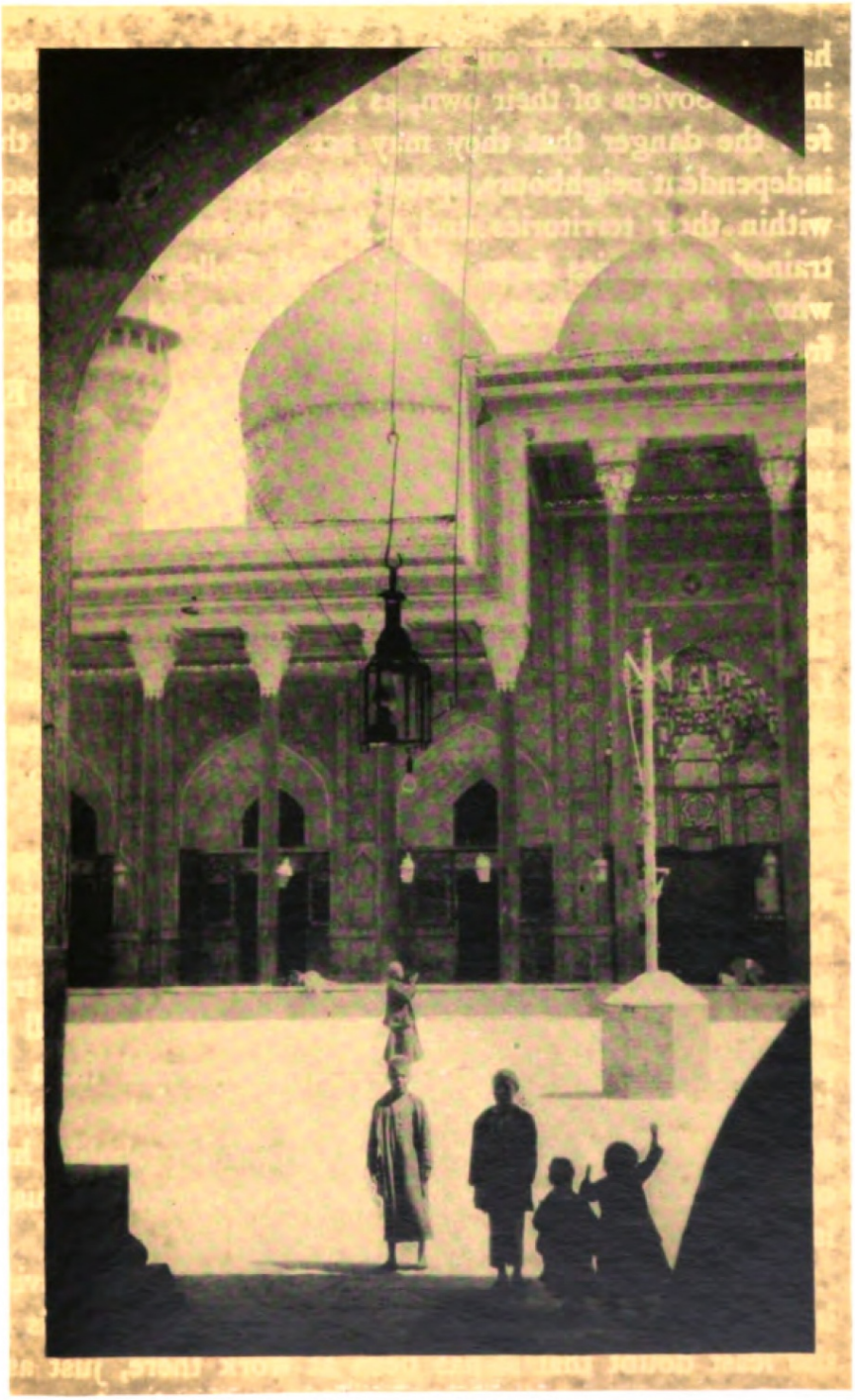

A SHIAH SHRINE IN IRAQ

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will have about as much influence on the future tendency of affairs in China as it has had in Irish affairs, that is, less than nothing. Wherever a people is striving for new conditions or for self-expression, Bolshevist influence will be found, simply because Moscow invariably takes advantages of unsettled conditions to make itself felt. But, after all, its implications are purely Russian, and by no means universal of application, and in the end are bound to be thrust aside by natural and local sentiment.

Of course we should not take the Bolshevist menace unseriously. But there is equal folly in regarding it too seriously, in helping, by continuously stressing its activities, to spread its propaganda, in drawing too much attention to it, just as there is in underrating it. I feel that in the end it will have practically no influence upon the Muslim East, that indeed its propaganda there will be like the pit-pat of water on granite. Moscow is working on a very different type of mentality there, a mind that is really changeless, and which will not lend itself to the peculiarly futile arguments of the Leninist philosophy for the very good reason that it has really no interest in politics at all.

"No interest in politics!" I hear someone say. Yes, that is the whole truth, and it would be well that your European statesmen should bear this in mind. The East, as a whole, has very little real interest in politics as we know them in the West. Its politics are contained in and ancillary to its religions, and if you touch those you release a series of emotions such as Europeans display when their inherited political sentiments are aroused. You cannot point to the existence of any definite political parties in the East such as you have in Europe—there are no Afghan, Arab or Chinese Conservatives or Liberals. There are

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only Eastern Nationalists or Pan-Islamists—a very different thing, when one comes to think of it.

The conclusions to which I have arrived at are that monumental changes are occurring in the temper of the Muslim people, and the one tremendous movement which has come up in the foreground is a definite conception of nationalism. But does this feeling embody any breakaway from the general family of Islam? Quite decidedly no, rather is there an effort at self-expression which does not divorce Islamic principles, and presents it in the living phases more in tune with the present age.

To those students of Islam who are conversant with the real motives of the neo-Persian and neo-Turkish nationalism it is clear that these movements are no other than earnest efforts to withstand exotic ideals. On the other hand only superficial observers would gloat too wildly over the supposed downfall of the old principles in those renaissance Muslim countries which retain their love of the Universal Muslim Nationalism, their unveiled women and occidentally dressed men notwithstanding. If symptomatic of anything at all, the attempt of the Turks to cast off worn-out social customs is symptomatic of a new attitude of mind which judges every secular idea in terms not of age, but in those of its utility in a world where sentiment has given place to value.

The rise of the Turkish, Persian and the Arab and other nationalisms as suggestive of local patriotism indicates no revolt against Islam, but revolt against an alien system of materialism—which respects nothing that is not founded on concrete energy and organized force. It is the one last effort of awakened Islam to hold through any and every means at its disposal the cherished heritage of its forebears wherever it can, and to hold it up as an example of worthy

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endeavour to those situated in less fortunate circumstances. Not only is the modern Islam reeling under the economic impact of Europe, but also an effort at the dethroning of the hierarchy of the clergy is a battle well worth watching. The Nationalist Party of Turkey lead the way in this respect, and the surprising rapidity with which they crippled the Doctors of Law in Old Stamboul has bewildered the world. The abolition of the Khalafat from Turkey was purely a political measure, and I have every reason in believing that both the political and economic conditions that obtain to-day in Angora are sufficient to employ the best efforts of the Turks without their further implication with foreign interests.

Discussing the Arab national attitude, one is forced to admit that the mind of the Arab is radically different from the mind of, say, the Turk or Persian or the Afghan. The real flame of Islam admittedly glows more brilliantly in his heart, and his imagination flies beyond the desert ; he thinks of the whole world as the home of Islam ; unlike a Turk, he is both a soldier and a philosopher ; and above all he is deeply conscious of the fact that it was from his sandy wastes that the Prophet of Allah rose ; and consequently he thinks more often about the Great Confederacy of Islam. The Revolt of Arabia against the Turks during the War was a political measure in the same sense as was the abolition of the Khalafat dictated by politico-economic forces of the world. I have discussed the subject with Kings and the Bedouins of the desert and the priests in Arabia ; and never would a single man admit that the revolt against Turkey was a revolt against Islam. Their religious ties remain intact, they thought.

In Persia, a Shia country, a strong Pan-Islamic tendency is evident : " Forget whether Ali or Abu Baker ought to

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have been the first Khalifa," a Shia divine told me in Tehran; "the point to emphasize is that after centuries of discussion we have not yet solved that historical controversy, while all the time pure materialism of the West is breaking wave after wave upon us."

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CHAPTER XV

THE REVOLT OF THE VEILED WOMEN

NO study of present-day Muslim Asia would be complete without some mention regarding the change that is coming upon its womenfolk. I have no hesitation in saying that, judging by old standards, my veiled sisters of Islam are in revolt against practically everything which savours of the past. The ideas of our women are progressing so rapidly that if men of a generation ago were to arise, frankly they would not claim the modern Eastern girls as their own. The Western impact is, of course, responsible for much of it. Go wherever you like, in Turkey, Persia, Turkestan, India, even in my own conservative country of Afghanistan, you would be struck by the wave of modernization which is sweeping over feminist East. Within limits I welcome this change : for without it we would lapse into those dark ages from which we are happily just emerging in Asia.

One must admit that the present-day agitation amongst our women is a reaction against a pitiless thraldom of social incubi under which the Eastern women have groaned so long. Seclusion, or what is called Purdah, was imposed to such a degree as to divorce the female life from the work of man. Her education was neglected in a very large measure, and she was classed definitely as infra-human. And, although her legal rights were fully protected, there never was a question, for quite two centuries, of her lending

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a helping hand in the larger issues of life. I speak of the majority, not of that refined strata of Eastern society where Asian culture always remained a guiding point, and women "ruled" the men more truly than is generally known.

The War and other conditions, both political and economic, however, which have increased dissemination of ideas; press, wireless, and a thousand other devices that have "shortened the world," have brought about an awakening in the East unheard of during the time of my forefathers. But this renaissance of the Asian womanhood has touched only the fringes. Wherever it has gone it has nevertheless penetrated fairly deeply. Other odd corners are still dark, yet they are bound to feel the effect.

In certain Arab countries, for instance, a woman dare not show her face in the street. At Jaffa, when a few women, bent upon modernization, discarded their veils, there was a riot in the place till they were escorted to their homes by the police. In Persia, too, all must cover their faces and wear long, black flowing robes, pretty nearly reaching down to their ankles. When at home, of course, I question whether their frocks are less fashionable than those worn in London, New York or Paris. You need only to walk through the Poppy Street in Tehran—the capital of Persia—to be convinced of the hold that fine clothes and cosmetics have upon the feminine mind. Every fourth shop there caters for the ladies, and in the evening there is hardly standing room in the Moghazas, as the drapery stores are called.

But Turkey is unquestionably leading the way in this regard. Constantinople is now becoming the Paris of Asia. The women there began the modern era of their liberty with the dropping of the Yashmak. No longer would you see them in that brightly-coloured Feriji or cloak,

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which for generations hung over them with all the traditional thraldom of the ignorant clergy.

But when you get to the interior you are in a different world; even in Angora—the new capital—life differs very materially. Here is the real home of Turkey, for despite the fact that unprecendented success has attained the efforts of the new regime in Turkey, and that Paris frocks can be seen in the Grand Avenue at the foot of the hill on which Angora is built, yet go to the older parts of the town for a contrast. The veil is not there in some cases, but not a single woman would you see without the cloak of sombre black: for they have preserved the real essence of Islamic canon, which lays down that, "modesty is the soul of religion"; modesty for a woman is very greatly enjoined upon the "faithful women." This one sees adhered to in those Islamic countries, where effort is made to do away with the veil: for even in unveiled Turkey, when women are in conversation with men, no gaze is directed at the person addressed. They sit with downcast eyes till a humorous remark lights up their faces, and the smiling expression plays in their eyes but briefly, like the sunset in the distant hills of Stamboul. In intelligence, the younger women in Turkey I found infinitely superior to their menfolk. Their grasp of ideas is prodigious, and they are simple, like a child, for they know no half measures—they love or hate. "We were a great nation," spoke a Turkish girl of twenty in fluent Persian to me, "we are going to be greater." That remark I thought gave me a glimpse of a great fire of nationalism that blazes in the minds of everyone in Turkey now.

"Why should we be sat upon by any nations," added her girl cousin—she was a teacher in a girls' school in an Anatolian town—"the Greeks, the English, the Germans,

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and all others have been friends and enemies ; but we must stand on our own legs." She was very definite ; and I wondered whether she was not quoting a passage from one of the recent speeches that a well-known Turkish nationalist made in Smyrna.

I let these remarks simmer in my mind before I thought of arriving at any conclusion, as these ladies belonged to the old families, and believing that aristocracies approximate everywhere, it was wiser to discover the true tendency lower down in society. That came to me somewhat rudely in the office of a Travel Agency away down in the south of Anatolia. " You are not business-like," remarked a young lady of Turkish blood over the counter of her office because I had questioned the advisability of long travel by railway to Syria. " The world has changed," she reminded me. " You must excuse me suggesting your travel route to you. I wish to be of help. We in Turkey are educated to shoulder our share of the burden. Men have plenty to carry." She had qualified but recently at the Girls' High School in her town—she told me—and had marched with banners in a procession in honour of the liberation of womanhood in Turkey not a few weeks ago. And her father —an old gentleman of the true Uzbek race, sat smoking his narghile and sipping his coffee under a mulberry tree. " I am Muslim," he said, waving me away with his hand as I levelled my camera at him, " none shall take my photograph.

Which is the Weaker Sex ?

The quoting of above conversations is important in the light of the fact that practically all progressive sections of the women of the East resent the stigma of being a weaker sex. And after what I have seen and studied I am inclined to agree with them.

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Of course it wholly depends on what we mean by " weak." Physically speaking, man has infinitely the stronger muscular development, but female fibres seem more lasting, and have assuredly a longer life, possibly because woman is more resilient and adaptable than man, less amenable to change of temperature and climate. Mentally, man appears the more staple of the two sexes. But is he actually so ? Feminine thought is manifestly more protean than male thought, less vigorous and more lively. But does not that render it all the more effective in world affairs, in the great results of life ? For my part, I have always believed that woman rules and manages man without letting him suspect that she does so. He thinks he makes treaties and wars and that he decides the destinies of nations, but he is probably only the mouthpiece of woman after all is said and done.

It seems to me that most writers on the subject have not sufficiently stressed the extraordinary difference between the distant origins of the sexes. It is scarcely too much to say that in the remote past " man " and " woman " were two entirely different organisms which came to be associated almost through pure accident. This, to the best of my belief, accounts for much of the indefiniteness and loose thinking about the sexes and their interrelations. The seeming receptiveness and placidity of woman, the vigour and enterprise of man, are merely reminiscent of their original biological functions in a primitive cellular phase. But in the course of countless ages the sexes have certainly assumed something of each other's attributes through long intermixture, and this the present age is revealing as no era in the world's history has hitherto done.

Let us regard woman's credentials for sex hegemony. To begin with, her biological history, in the early stages

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at least, is infinitely older than that of man, and this is almost certainly the reason why she matures earlier than her opposite. In the primitive stages of human history she also had much greater opportunities for mental growth. At a time when man was almost exclusively engaged in food-getting, her avocation of home-keeping not only gave her more leisure for thought and consideration, but her very weakness awakened in her the necessity for a philosophy of self-protection against the rude habits and brutal manners of primitive man.

This resulted in a form or creed of self-protection allied to the magical. Too weak to exchange buffets with her mate, and probably in constant fear of ill-treatment from him, she developed a system of supernatural terrorism, wrapped herself in mystery and frightened her savage companion with veiled allusions to the darker powers, terrifying outbursts of hysterics, spells and incantations. Her mysterious life-giving attributes must already have impressed him, must have appeared to him as magical, and her histrionics completed the illusions. She could make him supremely uncomfortable when she chose.

In a later stage of society she became the conservator of the tribal lore, traditional and medical. It was the adoption by humanity of an agricultural state of existence which first distributed this condition of things, although the woman of the ruling class remained the sorceress, in Europe at least, in some cases until well into the thirteenth century.

Woman, up to Roman times in Britain, so long, indeed, in any country where comparative barbarism prevailed, was, and is still, under such conditions, protected by a system of taboos which forbade her ill-usage and which permitted only "legal" punishments for her iniquities. But when these broke down through alterations and

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enlargements in religious belief, she became almost the chattel of man.

But the leisure afforded by the seraglio or harem, in which numbers of women with nothing to occupy themselves were herded, instigated a habit of intrigue, awakened a desire to pull the strings of that outer world of which they heard only the echoes. Their amatory power over their masters, added to the natural wish that their own children should inherit, stimulated conspiracy, and resulted in ripe experience and political address. These hidden women agitated kingdoms, made wars, and influenced their husbands almost as they chose—and they have gone on influencing them. No man, however shrewd or far-seeing he may believe himself, is immune from the influence of the women of his family. Their thoughts and ideas are greatly more nimble than his, indeed to a great extent thay *are* his thoughts, according to whether he is weak or strong of purpose, in most cases, I believe, no matter how strong of will he may be.

On every page of the political history of Europe and Asia is written the triumphant purpose of woman. Just as she is the light of existence, and probably because of that, she is also the motive power of society. Man rough-hews the policy, fashion and circumstance of life, but woman shapes them to completion and fills in the blanks. The Treaty of Versailles was made by three men. Who believes it? Hundreds of women, invisible whispering dryads, in sibylline strain, they saw what the masculine makers did not, indeed could not, see, for they all have the gift of that worldly intuition which only a proportion of men possess. And if there were errors of logic in the pact, they arose out of failure to adopt, to receive, the adjurations of these Egerias.

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Egeria, the whispering, admonitory goddess in the wood, is she not indeed the prototype of the wise, retiring, half-seen feminine spirit who arranges the chaotic, robustuous blundering ideas of man into orderly sequence? Woman illogical? No, she is fundamentally much more logical, the supreme materialist, earth made vocal. Man is spirit, the poet, and there is something veridically masculine in the finer sense in all women poets, poetry is only another name for spiritual might. It is the deep, in-dwelling common sense of woman which makes the world's wheels go round, and if she pretends, or has acquired, the pose of the romantic, it is only the better to have her way with man, the romantic incurable, who must, she feels by intuition, be humoured in this.

"Man is fire, woman is tow." Nonsense. Woman is world, man is spirit, and as she is aware that he seeks the spiritual, sorceress as she is, she assumes its form. Woman is Galatea, the primeval rock or marble, masquerading as faerie, the earth-elemental, fulfilled and inspired with the level, essential, purely material philosophy of her mother, scorning the thing that "does not pay," laughing away the dream. Yes, she is the stronger, as earth is more strong than atmosphere.

It will not be until man has arrived at a true perception of her terrestrial conventionality, her four-square orientation of thought, her inability to recognize that all the most wonderful and beautiful things in life are hopelessly illogical and unremunerative, that he will place his foot in the stirrup of mental freedom. When the women's Westernization movements in the East decreed that they should go publicly unveiled, half of Asia was horrified. Which half? The male, of course. It felt instinctively that woman was the stronger force, had already far too much power, without

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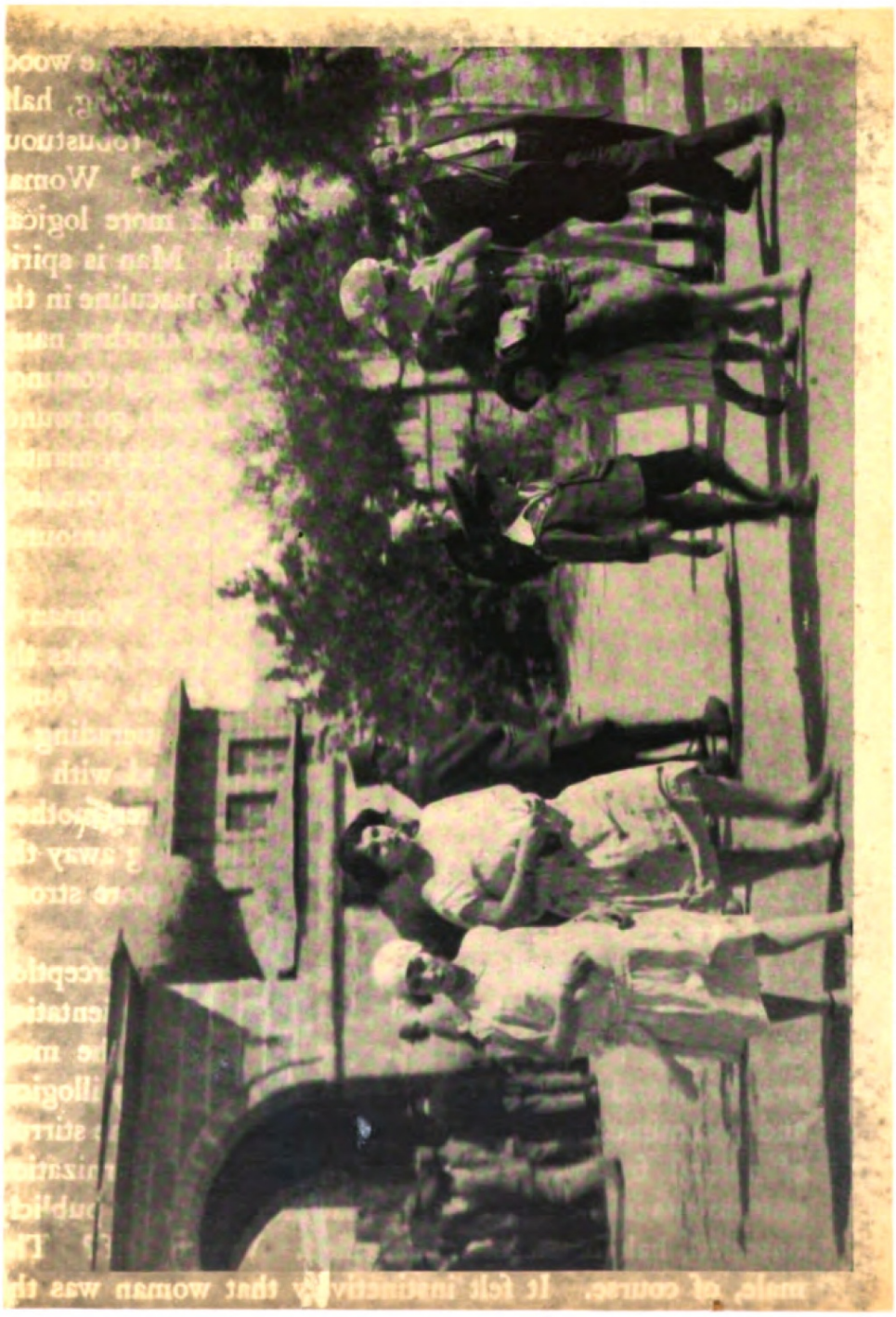

UNVEILED WOMEN OF MODERN TURKEY IN AN ANATOLIAN TOWN

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setting her loose on the world. After all, are we not here to achieve the conquest of the earth of which woman is the most powerful manifestation, the supreme and almost impregnable symbol ?

Why the Eastern Women Veil.

But strong as the forces of argument for a feminist movement undoubtedly are in the East, circumstances still linger in certain localities of Muslim Asia, where the same amount of unveiling as obtains, for instance, in Turkey now, is not indicated. In most countries of the Middle East any tampering with the social customs of the people would be disastrous : because the womenfolk there are still " delicate," and need protection ; because side by side with the ideals of progress, the faith of Allah makes us believe that women, and what they stand for, namely, Chastity, are too delicate, needing maybe some protection from the evil influences of the world.

I am not standing in defence of ignorant Orientals, who have broken this essential convention between man and woman, any more than an Englishman would for a half-drunken man who tries to crack a beer-bottle over his wife's head in certain London areas. The two are realms apart. The question is of what is the spirit of the problem.

With this basic idea that women being more delicate, more susceptible to suggestions, we think that they need to be protected against gross impulses of men ; because women are to be valued as the mothers of mankind. Following this line of thought we believe that in communities where economic interests mingle with a thousand others, men of various stages of outlook and perception grow up. Some have more sublime principles than others, and that kind being always in the minority can and does menace the integral ideals which should prevail amongst Eastern

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sexes. It is from " the clod and stone of humanity " that women have to fear most in Asia as even in civilized Europe.

During the last century or so this lower strata of mankind in the East has been less fortunate in educational acquirements, and consequently, in Oriental cities, where they abound, some kind of control has to be placed upon their passions. The Purdah system came to help in that regard as an indirect protective measure. It has no reflection on the chastity of Oriental women, nor has it anything to do with their social status. It is merely dictated by necessity.

But, mark you, this obtains only in the cities for the most part ; for even now I have seen handsome-looking girls working in the fields of Arabia, Persia, and even in Afghanistan without any veil ; and in Turkey also the late Jamal Pasha told me, that when he was Governor of Stamboul some twenty years ago, he had to take particular steps for the protection of women in the streets ; he, indeed, had a very stringent order issued to have them more heavily veiled than before. The fact that now Turkish women can go about unveiled is a singular proof of the popular education there, speaking highly of a general increase in the public spirit of the modern Turk. He finds that his womenfolk do no longer need that protection to-day.

From an Islamic point of view, few people are aware about the actual Koranic injunctions in this regard. The Muslim Holy Book lays down :

> " Say to the believing women that they refrain from casting their looks upon strange men and observe continence ; and that they display not the decorated parts of their bodies except those which are external ; and that they draw their veil over their bosoms and let them not strike their feet together like dancers."

It would be noticed that there is no mention of veiling the face : and judging from the text, I think that from any

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lady in a modest and respectable family in Europe, the same would be expected even in this modernist age.

In Persia, I have seen this practised in the manner as the Koran says. There is a long black cloak, but the face is " not covered," only shaded : in Egypt the same practice prevails ; and now in Bokhara, in Central Asia, most women are just as unveiled as in Turkey.

The whole question is of time and conditions, for wherever, in the East, a certain measure of " decorum and a proper behaviour " has been created, women even in the cities are not veiled in the sense as they are and would continue to be in certain Asiatic countries.

Time alone would tell how much of this unveiling is needed for national progress in those areas : though, one thing is certain, that the movement cannot, should not take its cue from the West, for in its entirety it is against our mind.

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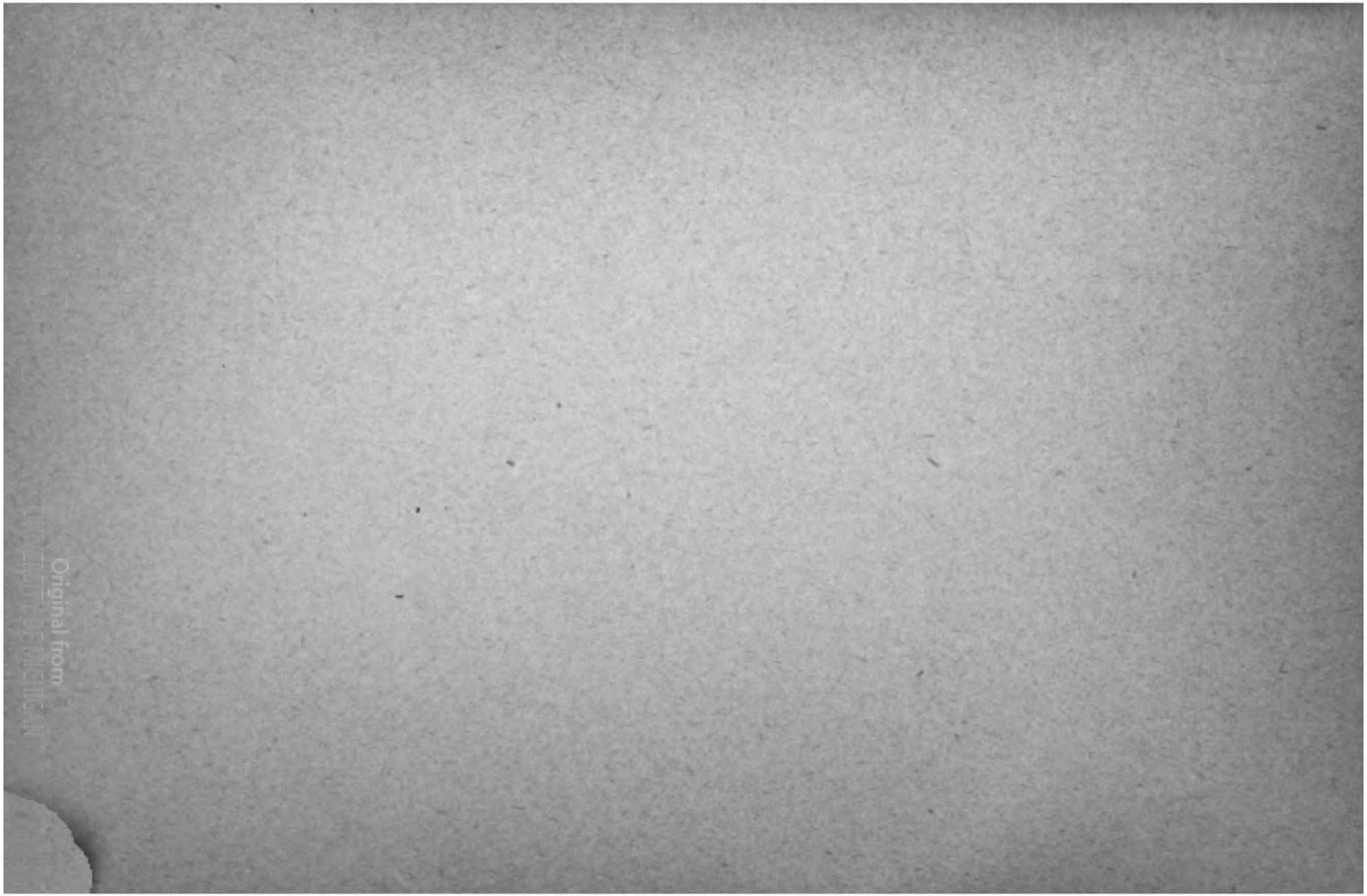

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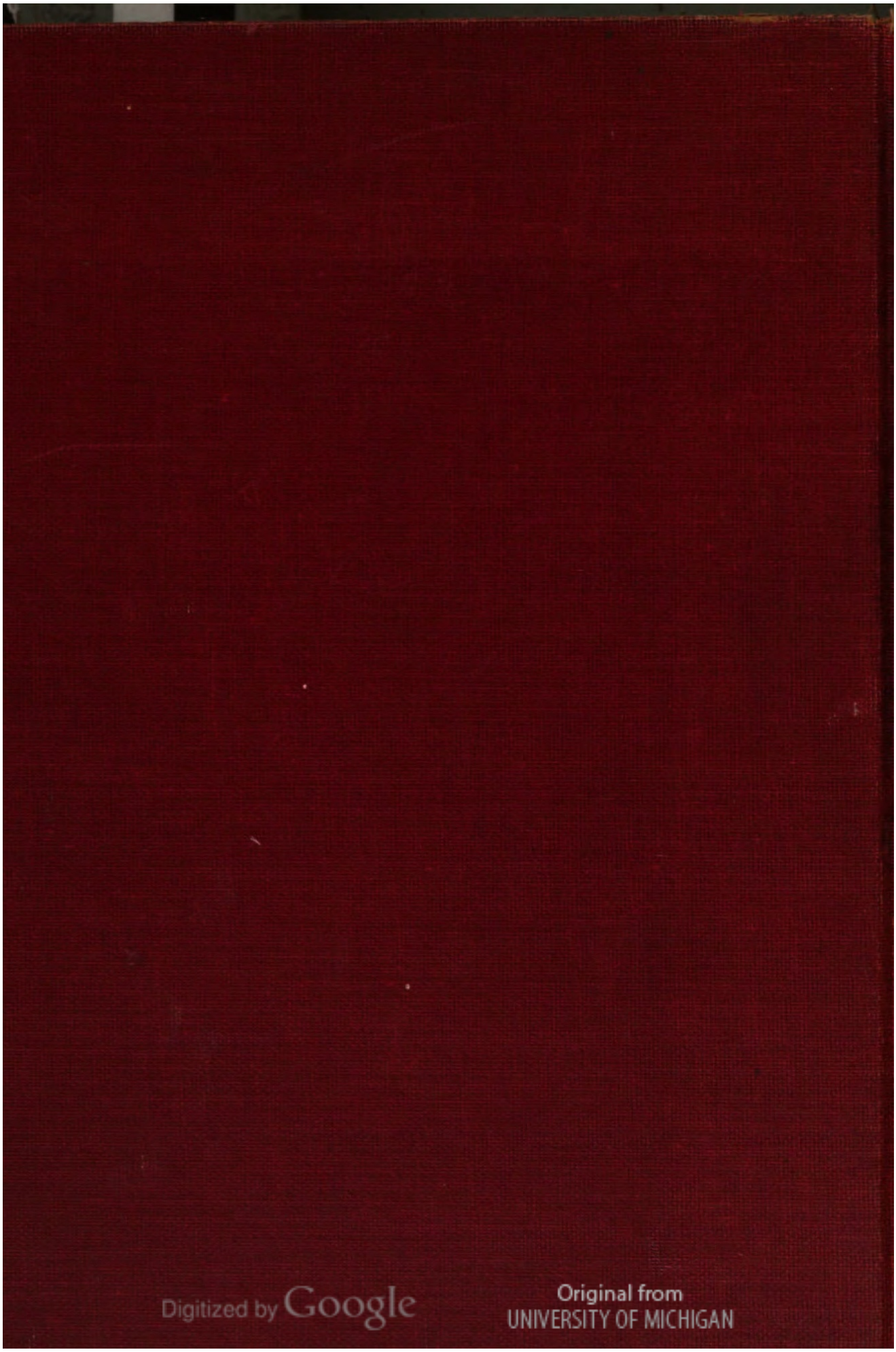
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